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The Challenge to Liberalism in Italy

By RICHARD WIGG

ONE evening, just before the Italian general election took place last June, I was in a small cinema of a northern Italian city to see 'The Difficult Years'. The film tells of the misfortunes of a Sicilian local government clerk and his family under fascism. Beside me was a group of housewives on their weekly visit to the pictures. During an interval, one of them asked the title of the film again. 'The Difficult Years'. She immediately replied 'But they were easier than nowadays!'

The results of the election showed that that housewife was by no means exceptional in her discontent. The existence of a similar social discontent played a highly influential part in determining the failure of Italian liberalism and the rise to power of Mussolini in 1922. A sense that events in Italy are working towards a repetition of 1922 has been powerfully increased of recent months by the turn taken in the Trieste problem. The present Italian Government finds it difficult to take a firm line with Italian patriotic aspirations because it relies in parliament on the support of the Monarchist Party. Its rise to influence was one of the most significant results of the June general election, for the members and supporters of the Monarchist Party all possess an impeccable fascist past. Naturally, then, the fascist right took advantage of the opportunity offered it by the patriotic celebrations of early November. For the successful exploitation of disappointed patriotic aspirations offers the easiest way the fascist right could repeat its accession to power of 1922. Thus, once again, the oligarchical interests it represents would be saved from the threatening social discontent.

Is another failure of Italian liberalism inevitable, then? I do not think so. If you examine the leading newspapers, the articles of magazines interested in politics, the speeches of the politicians and their

memoirs from the turn of the last century until the years immediately after the Great War in Italy, something highly significant, I believe, emerges. In the debate of Italian politics reflected there you can make out what I would like to call an unofficial and most unorganised 'opposition'. Sometimes it is led by conservatives like Giustino Fortunato or Giovanni Amendola, at others by radicals like Gaetano Salvemini or Piero Gobetti, but always by liberals of a stature unsurpassed anywhere in Europe for their courage and intellectual integrity. This 'opposition' shows itself to have been acutely conscious that Italy was facing moments of decisive choice for liberalism and democracy during the first twenty years of this century. Further, it prospected courses of action that suggest how the sad events of 1922 need never have occurred. And this is important for our interest in Italy's democratic problem today. For the attention this 'opposition' gave to ways of reducing the social discontent that existed in its time suggests the condition on which a second failure of Italian liberalism can be avoided.

Nothing less than a peaceful social revolution has to be accomplished. And this, in a country as naturally poor as Italy, can only be achieved economically by fiscal reform to re-distribute the national wealth. The influence at present exercised over Italian society by oligarchical interests would thus fall, while that of the poorer classes would rise with their increased purchasing power. In a parliamentary democracy, the political power to liberalise society can only come from the votes of the working classes led by the more progressive elements of the middle classes. One of the first lessons, indeed, to be derived from the tragedy of 1922 is that no liberal state can hope to continue for long as such, if it does not count among its satisfied supporters large masses of the common people.

If the votes of the common people are so important to the survival of a liberal state, perhaps we ought to consider why the Christian Democrats, the Liberals, the Republicans, and the Democratic Socialists received such half-hearted support at the general election last June. For these four parties, forming the Italian Democratic Centre, represent the political base of the Republic set up in 1946.

Here I want to say something about a movement formed expressly for the election and called *Unità Popolare*. In some ways you could call it the descendant of that liberal 'opposition' I have mentioned. It, too, found the core of Italy's democratic problem to lie in the existence of widespread social discontent. The members of *Unità Popolare* had seceded from the Democratic Socialist and Republican Parties, and had set themselves the task of preventing a return to power of the Christian Democrats. This they did because they believed the social record of that party in office had been wholly inadequate to the needs of the common people.

'Defending the Lira'

The policy of 'defending the lira' of De Gasperi's Minister of the Treasury, Pella, effectively prevented any large-scale government deficit spending. And that alone could hope to begin to reduce the figure of nearly 1,500,000 completely unemployed. An energetic battle against tax evasion would help to finance such a programme. Instead, the Vanoni taxation reform openly boasted that Italy enjoyed the lowest taxation scales of any country she had trading relations with. Direct taxation still only accounted for eighteen per cent. of the total taxes paid, while in England the equivalent figure was fifty-five per cent. The gross discrepancies in income distribution prevented the growth of a truly democratic society. While the Monarchist leader Lauro declared in his tax returns an income which would work out at £450 a day, the Vigorelli Commission on Poverty revealed there were still 6,000,000 Italians who belonged to families having a total income of just less than twelve shillings a day. In the Land Reform, too, although promises of expropriation had been made in millions of hectares, the actual redistribution to the peasants still only amounted to thousands of hectares.

I have thought it worth while to consider these criticisms in some detail, for they express in a more developed form much of the grumbling I heard moving among the common people at the time of the general election. In order to show discontent with the Democratic Centre, you could vote only for the Communists. If this was the popular reasoning on the matter, we can see how those votes might be brought back to reinvigorate the Democratic Centre. Clearly the force to democratise a society cannot come from the efforts of a few political parties alone. They can lead with a programme of social reform only if they are willingly supported by the more progressive elements of a whole society. The issue therefore returns to my discontented housewife at the pictures. What reserves of social 'give and take'—of liberalism, in a word—exist in Italian society that might permit a resolution of the discontent? Obviously there is no simple answer. The Italian people has been engaged since the Risorgimento on the long and complicated process of re-defining its national character. Each observer as he moves through Italian society can only try to form his own approximate judgment.

To begin with, you notice everywhere that willed immobility of interest and imagination that hinders the development of a really powerful social conscience. This immobility has clearly been aggravated by twenty years of fascism. Even the youngest at the June election could remember something of the regime—frequently, indeed, it was fascist indoctrination at school—and a man has only now to be forty-five to have lived consciously through the entire experience. If fascism remains a threat to liberal forces in Italy at the present time—and, after all, it polled, last June, over an eighth of the total votes cast—this is because the economic conditions that favour its growth have not yet been altered. Certain elements among the rich and middle classes seeking to maintain all their privileges regard fascism as a most fortunate discovery, because the only alternative imaginable to them is a People's Democracy. Among the working classes it is not uncommon to find equally illiberal feelings. For the Social Communists, who polled over a third of the votes, have tried hard to teach their own interested conclusions from the fascist experience to the common people; not less but more socialism, and a final abandonment of that idea of working-class co-operation with the more progressive elements of the middle classes on which the future of Italian liberalism turns.

The attitude of the young people of the Italian middle classes has

been the subject of much attention in recent years. Often, I cannot help feeling, the journalist's sense of a story has meant that a noisy minority has been confounded for the whole. During the greater part of the past two years I have lived and studied with Italian university students. Those who were willing to fall victim to any fascist agitator seemed to me to be only an extreme minority. That does not mean the vast majority were indifferent about the political future of their country. Often, indeed, they displayed some of that sad pessimism which has always been the mark of the best Italian liberal spirits. The movement *Unità Popolare*, for instance, had a wide and influential university following. These young people seem, however, prematurely convinced that the greater measure of social justice realised elsewhere would be beyond the powers of existing Italian society. A cynicism is gradually spreading among such elements at what appears to be the revival in recent years of the fascist right. But, as I have tried to suggest, fascism was only stunned at the end of the war. It has yet to be killed.

At the present time the 'live and let live' elements are in control of Italian society. This is important, for it means the chance remains open to try to organise and lead the more alert and progressive elements. But the pessimist and the cynic can only be reconquered by tangible achievement. And in the Italy of today the only political force capable of providing the means to that achievement is the Democratic Centre.

There exists, in fact, a grim challenge to liberal political forces in Italy: grim, for if it is not accepted their failure is assured, and if it is accepted, their success is at best only a reasonable probability. The Democratic Centre has to make a bid to lead Italian society, trusting itself to a reviving liberal tradition. By the sincere advocacy and the gradual realisation of a body of thorough-going social reform, we shall, over the years, discover two things: whether a significant number of the votes of the working classes can be attracted away from the extreme left, and whether the middle classes can manage to sacrifice some of their privileges without finding too much of their strength draining away to the extreme right. I can see no other way of resolving Italy's democratic problem. Obviously this resolution, partly social and partly political, will require much time. The danger is that, with the existing widespread social discontent, some political issue can be exploited so as to bring to crisis proportions the democratic problem. The result would be, as in 1922, to submerge all the 'middle of the road' elements in Italian society in another violent reaction.

There has been such an obvious threat of this kind during the past few months that I want to end by considering the connection between the Trieste problem and Italian domestic politics. We must go back to the constitutional crisis which followed the general election and lasted until August. The parliamentary position produced by the election meant that there existed, in effect, a twofold choice for the Democratic Centre. The first alternative was to adopt such a programme as would obtain support from the fascist fellow-travelling Monarchist Party. The second alternative was to attempt a more progressive interpretation of the election results by implementing a new programme which would draw support from within the Democratic Centre itself. Showing some of that willed immobility I have mentioned, the Christian Democrats chose against the second alternative. There only remained the first, and this Pella's Government represents today.

Danger of Co-operation with the Monarchists

But co-operation with the Monarchist Party must always be dangerous. It is not interested in upholding Italy's liberal way of life. If, by procrastinating, it can succeed in preserving in the immediate future the privileged interests it represents, the political forces searching for a moderate solution of the democratic problem in Italy will have been ruined and discredited. Then the fascist right will be able, once again, to present itself as the saviour of Italian society from communism. So much the better, of course, if a patriotic issue can be brought in to waste more time and further discredit the existing liberal regime. We have yet to see whether the Monarchists will allow Pella to make the moderate settlement of the Trieste problem he so clearly needs.

As the riots of November in Trieste only served to confirm, there exists in Italy no third possibility. Either the Democratic Centre makes some attempt in the coming years to begin that peaceful social revolution reinserting the common people in the Italian state, or else the fascists will fill up the vacuum. They have already done so once before, and they will do so again if the opportunity is allowed to mature for them. *Staremo a vedere.*—*Third Programme*

Words Through a Curtain

ALAN BULLOCK on the B.B.C.'s European Service

PROPAGANDA is an ugly word, and most governments prefer to call it by some other name, like information. Yet, however reluctant governments are to admit it, propaganda is an essential part of the modern state—as essential as advertising to modern business. A country like Britain, with great traditions of free speech, does not take at all kindly to the idea of propaganda, even when it is a case of putting the British case to the rest of the world; and it was not until the autumn of 1938, at the time of the Munich crisis, that the British Government first employed radio as an auxiliary of diplomacy.

It is unlikely that this hesitant experiment had much effect. Even a

the habit of listening to a foreign radio station, especially when London's broadcasts were shouted down by the much more powerful and extensive German radio.

The Nazis believed in propaganda. It was their most important weapon in the struggle for power inside Germany and in their conduct of foreign policy after 1933. Both Hitler and Goebbels were masters of its use, and lavished resources on the propaganda services. The British, clinging to older traditions, did not believe in propaganda and regarded it with suspicion until the latter part of the war. But this was not altogether a disadvantage, for it enabled the European Service to establish itself without too much interference. It may have helped

to account for the surprising fact that foreign broadcasting was left in the hands of the B.B.C. and never brought directly under the Ministry of Information or the Foreign Office. This was a happy accident. The ambiguous status of the B.B.C.'s European Service created a lot of administrative problems, but it gave us a freedom of comment and a freedom to experiment which we could scarcely have enjoyed as part of a government department. Nothing kills effective propaganda, or good broadcasting for that matter, more surely than the official touch.

The basis of the B.B.C.'s foreign broadcasts was news, and this, more than anything else, was the secret of their success. Listening to London in the occupied countries was always difficult and often dangerous, but people were willing to take the trouble and the risks to hear the news of which they were starved. This was true not only of the occupied countries, but of Germany and

'Exiles speaking with an understanding of their compatriots no Englishman could equal': H.M. Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands broadcasting from Britain in 1941; and (right) Dr. Jan Masaryk broadcasting to Czechoslovakia in 1942

year later, at the beginning of the war, although the B.B.C.'s European Service had been put on a permanent footing, it could not be compared in volume or effectiveness with the propaganda machine controlled by Goebbels. When I joined it at the beginning of 1940, the European Service was housed in a few rooms at Broadcasting House and was still trying to run a news service without tape machines of its own, sending a boy to borrow the agency messages from the Empire Service next door. By 1944, however, it had grown to an organisation numbering several hundreds, broadcasting round the clock in every European language from Albanian to Finnish—and, more important, it had established an ascendancy over its German rivals as complete as that of the Allied Air Forces over the Luftwaffe. During the war the B.B.C.'s European Service acquired a larger audience and a higher reputation than any other external broadcasting service has ever done.

This is surprising, for at first sight the Germans had most of the advantages on their side. As they overran one country after another they acquired many more transmitters than the B.B.C. European Service could ever hope to dispose of, and a larger number of these could be spared for jamming. The Germans were much nearer to the audiences they were trying to reach and in many cases simply took over the country's normal home service. It took time for people to acquire

Italy as well. The news was given a slant, as it is in every newspaper: we did our best to balance defeats and setbacks with more encouraging news, but we did not suppress the bad news. From the very beginning of hostilities, Noel Newsome, the Director of European Broadcasts, and the man who more than any other gave the war-time European service its character, insisted on the B.B.C. principle that only by broadcasting bad news together with the good should we be able to establish the reliability of the B.B.C. Never has honesty more clearly proved



General Wladyslaw Sikorski broadcasting to General de Gaulle speaking to his fellow-countrymen in Poland in 1942



1941

to be the best policy, although it needed foresight to establish this principle firmly at a time when we had nothing but bad news to broadcast.

The real difficulty with which we had to contend was obtaining reliable news. Any government is chary of publishing information in war time, naturally enough, and we had often to find out what was happening from reports which lacked official support and were exaggerated or inaccurate. I remember vividly the night on which the Germans invaded the Low Countries. From midnight onwards there were reports of gunfire and fighting on the frontiers, but no official statement. There were only two of us on duty and we had to take the responsibility of broadcasting from London news of an invasion which, if it proved to be false, could do great damage to the B.B.C.'s reputation and cause confusion abroad. We rang up one department after another without success. All our hopes rested on a sealed envelope which, on pain of the most dire penalties, we were forbidden to open before 5 a.m. At five o'clock to the minute we tore it open, convinced that it would settle our dilemma, only to find that it contained the news of British troops landing in Iceland. Fortunately, at the last minute, just before we put our first bulletin on the air, an official statement was published by the Dutch Government. We were not always as lucky as that.

News of the Occupied Countries

This problem was most acute over news of the occupied countries. We were naturally eager to publish anything that reached us about resistance to the Germans, but there was always the danger of getting the facts, or at least the details, wrong. This could only irritate those who were on the spot and in a position to judge for themselves. Yet, if we had waited for official confirmation, we should have had to omit nine out of ten reports about the Resistance. Caution indeed was far from being the safe rule it might appear; surprising things constantly happen in war, and I remember only too well the scepticism with which the first news of the attempt on Hitler's life was greeted on July 20, 1944.

But news, although it was the foundation of the B.B.C.'s European broadcasts, could not fill the whole picture. It was an essential part of our job to encourage our friends in Europe and to convince both friends and enemies that, however long it might take, the Allies were going to win the war. It was equally necessary to counter the grotesque account which the nazi radio gave of Britain and her war aims. Anti-British propaganda on the continent of Europe has a very long history. Britain has often been criticised by her allies, and a phrase like 'perfidious Albion' first appears in the eighteenth century. Many of the slogans used by the nazi propagandists can be found in the anti-British literature of the French Revolution and the time of Napoleon. There were plenty of people in Europe only too ready to believe that the British had betrayed their allies or were a finished power after Dunkirk. We set to work to give our audiences some idea of the British war effort, to interpret the social changes which were taking place in war time, and to relate these to the lasting traditions and institutions of the country. Until the Americans began to develop their own broadcasts to Europe, we had also to find the time to put across a picture of the resources and of the character of the United States. We had to try to do the same for Russia after she became our ally.

Looking back, it seems clear that it was in relation to Russia that we came nearest to being dishonest with ourselves. Admiration for the Russian people's endurance and gratitude for the part they played in defeating Hitler were genuine and widespread, but the Soviet Union was not fighting for the same ends as ourselves. Not only the propagandists but the western governments, too, preferred to ignore this fact and papered over the ominous cracks which appeared from time to time in the alliance. Up to a point, of course, it was essential to insist on the unity of the Allies, if only because Hitler and Goebbels staked so much on its breaking up. Moreover, so long as the war lasted the alliance held. The trouble arose over the settlement which was to follow the war.

This question of war aims was by far the hardest to deal with, for even between the United Nations there were plain, head-on conflicts of intention. Russia, for instance, was determined to reduce Poland to the status of a satellite, and the Poles viewed with undisguised bitterness the British and American attitude towards Russia's plans in eastern Europe. Most difficult of all was the future of the enemy countries. Goebbels was delighted with the formula of Unconditional Surrender. He used this to stiffen German resistance by drawing a

horrifying picture of what the Allies would do with a defeated Germany. Somehow or other the B.B.C.'s German Service had to counter the effect of this argument without committing the Allied Governments to any definite statements on the future of Germany. In trying to do this, they had to remember all the time that many others besides Germans were listening to what they said. The French, the Poles and the Czechs were intensely suspicious of British and American intentions towards Germany; they listened regularly to the B.B.C.'s German broadcasts, just as Yugoslavs listened to the Italian broadcasts and vice versa. By the latter part of the war this eavesdropping had become a common practice, and keeping the different sections of the European Service in step was no easy task.

Co-operation from the Emigré

The European Service could not have been run without the co-operation of a large number of Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Poles, and every other European nationality. Inevitably they were critical of much that was said in the B.B.C.'s broadcasts to their countries, and this criticism was often valuable. Some of the most successful broadcasters of the war—Jan Masaryk, or the famous French team, *Les Trois Amis*—were exiles speaking with an understanding of their compatriots no Englishman could equal. But there were obvious dangers in allowing too free a hand to men whose views on their own countries' politics and on British policy were liable to be distorted by the peculiar and often tragic situation of the émigré.

The shape of the future peace settlement preoccupied us more and more in the last year of the war; it was bedevilled not only by the conflicts between national ambitions but also by the divisions within nations. In many cases these divisions had been sharpened by the experience of occupation and collaboration. Our greatest handicap was the difficulty of penetrating the barrier—psychological no less than physical—which separated us from those living under German occupation, and understanding their different attitudes. Indeed, I am inclined to think that our inability to grasp the effect of these war-time experiences, especially collaboration, has been one of the biggest obstacles to British understanding of Europe since the war.

Yet the shortcomings of the B.B.C.'s European Service in handling the thorny problems of European politics only reflected the confusion of the Allied leaders themselves. We could scarcely hope to find solutions which had eluded more than one generation of European politicians. These were failures of policy, not of propaganda, and it is a mistake to suppose that propaganda can ever be a substitute for policy. It would have been easy to promise all things to all men and to concentrate entirely, as the German propagandists so often did, on short-term advantages. But this was a practice that very soon defeated itself. In the long run propaganda cannot outstrip events. The promise of liberation which remains unfulfilled, the exhortation to rise against the occupying power which is left unsupported by help from without, only produce bitterness and apathy. The Germans knew this well and played with great effect upon the Allies' long delay in launching the invasion of Europe from the west. There is a lesson to be learned here by those who are eager to promise liberation to the peoples of eastern Europe today.

Ideas as a Weapon

To say this is not to underestimate the effect of propaganda. In the conflicts of the twentieth century, from Wilson's Fourteen Points to the communist peace campaign, ideas have provided a weapon the effect of which is comparable with that of atomic bombs. This is a hateful conclusion for anyone who cares for ideas as something more than competing ideologies. It is, I believe, to our credit that we were reluctant to accept this conclusion, inescapable though it is, and that the B.B.C. never tried to compete with the slick and unscrupulous propaganda of the nazis. Its restraint in the end created more lasting results. Before the end of the war, nazi propaganda was universally discredited. By contrast, as I found when I visited Europe in 1945 and afterwards, to say that one had belonged to the B.B.C. produced an almost overwhelming friendliness and proved a magic password to overcome any difficulty. Despite the muddles and the inconsistencies, the voice of London had become accepted as a familiar and reliable friend by millions of people in Europe. The B.B.C.'s European Service had won the rarest of all rewards for the propagandist: the gratitude and affection of those who listened to it.—*Third Programme*

The B.B.C.'s Service on Short Waves

SIR NOEL ASHBRIDGE reviews progress over twenty-one years

THE great excitement about the possibilities of short waves started in earnest immediately after the end of the first world war. Years before the war, ships' operators thousands of miles away, in the Pacific for instance, had noticed that they sometimes heard English coastal stations transmitting to ships in the English Channel. 'A freak transmission', we used to call this sort of thing, and dismissed it as unpredictable and therefore unimportant. Of course the operator in the Pacific was not receiving short waves—he got his signals on the normal ships' wave of 600 metres, but the signals got there for roughly the same reason as short waves travel thousands of miles, and the important thing was that this freak reception started scientific people wondering how wireless waves actually did get to the other side of the world, instead of going off at a tangent.

Development in War

Then the war came along, and most of our scientific effort was concentrated on the special needs of the fighting forces—for example, the wireless sets which could be used in a dug-out to keep in touch with the back areas when all the wires had been blown sky-high by a shell. One of the outcomes of all this war activity was the rapid development of the thermionic valve. It had been almost a laboratory curiosity before the war: one used to have to heat some of them with a wax match to make them start working. It was really the perfecting of the thermionic valve which made experiments with short waves over long distances possible. In fact, the development of the thermionic valve during and after the first world war was probably a much more far-reaching development than the much better known development of radar during the recent war. The existence of the thermionic valve in a practical form stimulated scientific interest in what so far had been not much more than a subject for discussion—a theoretical possibility that the use of short waves instead of long waves for long-distance transmission really was important.

Long-wave stations could and did work in the early days completely without the use of thermionic valves at either receiving or transmitting end, and so long distances were already being covered by telegraphy. But the stations were enormously expensive and results were not always too good, and as far as telephony was concerned the valve was really essential for practical working. So, armed with valves, at first about the size of teacups, they said to themselves: 'What about these short waves; are they really any good for long distance work in a big way?' It was a question of dependability and knowing how to get the result you wanted in all, or nearly all, circumstances.

After a great deal of experimenting, Marconi and Franklin came to the conclusion that they were in a position to guarantee practical transmission to certain important places, at first mainly in the Dominions. Stations were specially built and a long schedule of transmissions was made, lasting many months. To cut a long story short, the possibilities of short waves were demonstrated beyond any doubt. Moreover, at that time there was plenty of room in the short-wave bands for stations of all kinds: in fact it was the emptiness of the short-wave bands that was one of the great attractions (although those happy days are gone for ever). If the world had had to stick to long waves for distant work, I do not think there could have been any broadcasting, or only on a very small scale: the Post Office would have had to hold on to all the wavelengths it could for its essential services.

Increase in Number of Channels

But this double technical revolution—first the development of the valve, then its use as an essential tool to explore, with favourable results, the behaviour of short wavelengths—tremendously increased the number of channels which engineers could make use of. And thus there arose the possibility of broadcasting to the Dominions and Colonies, or in fact to anywhere in the world. At first many people thought that although the broadcast might reach its target, there would be too much distortion of music and even of speech for programmes to be really

interesting to listeners. And the fading troubles have never been entirely solved.

As far as the B.B.C. was concerned, the next step was to set up an experimental station—in the works of the Marconi Company at Chelmsford. This achieved much more than previous efforts to broadcast overseas, but it was equipped with one non-directional aerial and used only one wavelength. The results were, therefore, very patchy, and were only satisfactory in certain parts of the world and at times when the one aerial, and the one wavelength happened to be suitable. These experiments created a great deal of interest, however, and gave an indication of what would be necessary in the way of transmitters and aerials if a regular service to the Dominions and Colonies was to be undertaken—which was the main objective at that time. The B.B.C. was anxious to go ahead straight away with the building of a fully equipped station, but at this point considerable delay was caused by the problem of who ought to pay for it. It was considered doubtful whether the income from broadcast licence fees collected in this country should be used for this purpose. There followed a long series of discussions with representatives of the Ministries interested in the project. The problem was also raised at conferences with representatives of the Dominions and Colonies. Almost everyone thought that the proposal was an excellent one, but almost no one seemed willing to contribute to the cost, either of programmes or of building a station.

In the end, the B.B.C. decided to take full responsibility for building the station and operating the service. The station itself was completed in rather less time than it would probably take to do the same thing today, and it was opened on December 19, 1932, by the late Mr. J. H. Whitley, Chairman of the Board of Governors. The Empire Service, as it was called at the time, soon became firmly established; and you may like to imagine the effect which the overseas short-wave service has had from 1932, from the days when the prestige of the new service was greatly increased by the broadcasts of His Majesty, King George V, to 1953, the year of the Coronation and tour of Her Majesty, his granddaughter.

German Competition

But to go back to the years before the war, it was not long before Germany was competing keenly for overseas listeners. The German station was efficient; government money was poured into it; it broadcast more hours and in more directions, it belonged to a first-class power which people were beginning to think was contemplating a world war. We eventually decided to install more, and more highly powered, transmitters, and all the time we were making efforts to give a stronger and clearer signal by concentrating into narrower beams the available power from the transmitters; we were continually scrutinising the results reported from overseas, in order to think out changes which would lead to better results. In doing this we received a great deal of help from distinguished radiophysicists—in particular I should like to mention Sir Edward Appleton. At the same time, regionalised programmes were developed and the overall hours of transmission increased. I am still referring to the Empire Service given by the B.B.C. in English only.

We were never to be asked to do anything which might interfere with the existing Empire Service; but, after long consideration, we were asked to provide services in foreign languages. The happy decade of 'fans', the decade of cementing friendships, was over. The years of international tension had begun. 'Britain was nearly alone among the nations in her policy of broadcasting to the world only in her own tongue'. Arabic, with particular reference to Italian rivalry, was first spoken from a B.B.C. short-wave transmitter on January 3, 1938; transmissions to the Latin American countries, with particular reference to German persistence, started in March. During the Munich crisis, the Prime Minister's talk from Downing Street on September 27 was broadcast in French, German, and Italian on six short-wave transmitters used by the Empire Service—and on all the medium waves used

(continued on page 1093)

The Listener

All communications should be addressed to the Editor of THE LISTENER, Broadcasting House, London, W.1. The articles in THE LISTENER consist mainly of the scripts (in whole or part) of broadcast talks. Original contributions are not invited, with the exception of poems and short stories up to 3,000 words, which should be accompanied by stamped and addressed envelopes. The reproductions of talks do not necessarily correspond verbatim with the broadcast scripts. Yearly subscription rate (including postage) £1 sterling. Shorter periods pro rata. Subscriptions should be sent to B.B.C. Publications, 35 Marylebone High Street, London, W.1, or to usual agents

Christmas 1953

FOR those who take Christmas seriously—it was a phrase thrown off by one of our contributors a week or two back, a pregnant phrase with multiple implications. For most people this season of the year is indeed a serious business—for parents with families; for shop-keepers; for caterers; for postmen; for those engaged in the organisation of broadcasting; for workers in the tourist industry; for hotel keepers; for parsons—though 'business' is not perhaps the most appropriate word and some of them might wish that they were even busier. For it would be an affectation to pretend that the emphasis of Christmas lies today in the purely spiritual realm, still less in the sphere of theology—which is not the same thing as saying that Christian men do not at this time lift up their hearts, or that the Christmas spirit, the spirit of love, good will, and neighbourliness, is not in evidence, or indeed that Christmas is no longer a great human experience in the non-material sense. It is however as well to remind ourselves that the historicity of Christ's birth and all that has traditionally flowed from it does not go unchallenged, and that the ethics of Christianity make a greater and more general appeal than its orthodox teaching and practice in the churches. 'No one person is now regarded as odd', writes E. G. Lee in his book *Christianity and the New Situation*,* 'who rejects, for instance, the miracles and the Godhead of Jesus. This is quite normal in current life and this marks the acceptance in modern life of the position that a certain past symbol of traditional Christianity is not of vital importance'.

But if the human situation today may be said to be one of greater freedom in so far as men's minds have in this respect been freed from the shackles of tradition, there lies in wait the possibility of a new and terrible tyranny—a tyranny based on the unspoken assumption that the individual is no longer responsible for his own actions. 'The tyranny of science', argues Mr. Lee, 'coupled with the tyranny of a self-sufficient society which claims to hold within itself the means to correct wrongs is probably a greater tyranny than any known to man since the existence of slavery'. Freedom within society and for society is one thing, carrying with it the seeds of its own destruction. Freedom found in a living power outside society is another. Therein lies the dilemma, the choice for man, not only in freedom but also in morality.

To know ourselves, to try to seek some answer to the questions whence we came, why we are here, and where we are going to, are aims that every thoughtful man can hardly help at least meditating on. Yet who can affirm that philosophy in that sense or indeed religion in an even wider sense are man's major preoccupations in the mid-twentieth century? To some (hoping they may be mistaken) the trend appears the other way, towards by-passing thoughts on human destiny perhaps because that destiny strikes one as too awful to contemplate, and concentrating on scientific and mechanical 'progress' in the hope perhaps of material salvation, but certainly at the expense of what Albert Schweitzer has called 'respect for life' by means of which we enter into a spiritual relation with the world. It is surely in this spiritual relation that the Christmas message finds an abiding habitation, and if we care about the future as we should it is open to us to regard Christmas as something more than what it has so long been and every sensible man hopes it will go on being, a time for jollification and feasting; we may regard it also—to put it at its lowest—as a time for reflection on the way the world is going, what man is making of his destiny, and what part each one of us is playing in the struggle. That at all events is one way, if we choose, of taking Christmas seriously.

* Allen and Unwin. 12s. 6d.

What They Are Saying

Mr. Dulles and E.D.C.

THE NATO MEETING in Paris, coupled with Mr. Dulles' warning about E.D.C. ratification, as well as the indictment against Beria, were the main subjects discussed by commentators last week.

The first reaction to Mr. Dulles' statement in France was indignant. *Le Figaro* described it as 'deplorably brutal', though it went on to say that France had no alternative to ratifying E.D.C. unless she was prepared to face the grave consequences of not doing so. An example of reaction based on second thoughts came from the independent left-wing *Combat* which was quoted as commenting:

One can condemn the American ultimatum, but at the same time one can understand it. The European army, after all, was a French invention. London and Washington embarked on this course at our request, but France has gradually changed her course since then.

From Australia, the *Melbourne Herald* was quoted as interpreting Mr. Dulles' statement as a deliberate attempt to prod the French out of indecision:

When the first indignant reaction dies down, Frenchmen may recognise the anxious kindness behind the lecturing tone of the American critic. While everyone agrees that the defence of western Europe cannot be assured without a strong German contribution, France still hesitates to act. The Dulles speech reads like an attempt to break this paralysis by shock treatment. It may not succeed directly. . . . But if it spurs France and Germany to find their own solution to a difficult problem, it will bring a healthy clearing of the European air.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* was quoted as follows:

If French opinion persists in its opposition to E.D.C., it must reconcile itself to the unfettered rearmament of Germany.

From Canada, the *Montreal Star* was quoted for the following comment:

While it is possible to understand and to some extent to sympathise with French feelings, it is impossible not to feel that France is too preoccupied with one possible danger and is neglecting the real one. . . . It is not diplomatic practice to say these things bluntly or openly; sensibilities are naturally ruffled by open pressure, but security is a more important consideration than sensibilities, and French decisions in this matter touch more than her own security.

American newspapers supported Mr. Dulles' statement. *The Washington Post* was quoted as follows:

E.D.C. is the key, not only to the reconciliation of Germany with western Europe, but also to the larger political and economic unity that can provide Europe's only real strength. . . . There is no really good alternative to E.D.C. as the French politicians well know. . . . If the momentum of the German election and the European movement is lost, the objective may be irretrievable. The last chance to make Germany a partner in a larger unity, instead of a rival, may be gone. . . . Mr. Dulles has done well to state the position boldly.

On December 16 Moscow broadcast an announcement by the Soviet State Prosecutor that the former Chief of the Secret Police, Beria, and six accomplices were to be tried at a special sitting of the Supreme Court for high treason and other crimes. All were said to have confessed their guilt. Beria's crimes were said to have dated back to 1919, when he allegedly began to have contacts with the British and other Intelligence Services. Since Stalin's death, continued the indictment, Beria had tried to use his position to seize power. On subsequent days Moscow radio reported that meetings were being held all over the U.S.S.R. at which the severest penalties were being demanded for the accused. In Sweden *Aftonbladet*, commenting on the small list of Beria's accomplices, was quoted as interpreting this to mean that Malenkov does not feel strong enough to conduct a purge on a grand scale. A Yugoslav broadcast commented:

It is hard to understand that the present Soviet Government does not see how ridiculous it appears in the eyes of the world when it asserts that it has kept a man who, according to their accusations, was a spy and a traitor for many years, in the highest posts concerned with the country's security. . . . In our opinion, however, Beria has committed much more serious criminal acts which have not been mentioned in the indictment. Under his leadership, the system of show trials, whose victim he himself will become, were instituted in other Cominform countries. Beria is also guilty of the death of innumerable known and unknown people within the Soviet Union itself, but he will not be tried for these crimes. He will be destroyed in accordance with the system which he so persistently developed and perfected.

Did You Hear That?

CHRISTMAS IN AMERICA

'THERE IS SOMETHING, I always think, to the English visitor at least, frightening about Christmas in America', said DONA SALMON in a Third Programme talk. 'It is so huge and so rich. Those advertisements in the glossy magazines about the "man who has everything" seem so true. The English visitor, feeling poverty-stricken and hardly able to cope with it all, longs sometimes to fall into a deep sleep and not wake again until everything is over. You feel so old—a thousand years old—among all these exuberant and hopeful people, hanging up their garlands, and staggering beamingly along under their loads of parcels, lighting from coast to coast their millions of Christmas trees.'

'We were bound from Seattle on the west coast to Atlanta in Georgia. Snow was thick on the ground when we left Seattle and the snow mountains behind us wore thick, grey-mist chemises. But the sun shone with a Sahara brilliance and below us the lakes and fir trees of Seattle seemed to glitter with joy. Our shopping district was a mass of holly, mistletoe, turkeys, red ribbons, and silver stars, and there were Santas on every corner. From every light standard a loud speaker, wreathed in holly, poured out "Holy Night" upon the frosty air, and several churches had their electric carillons going. It was so gay—the sun, the snow, the green leaves, the song, the bells, the red cheeks, the big, fur ear-muffs, the charming good humour of the crowds of shoppers. Even the disapproving English face, the face we wear so often in the United States, could not help breaking into beaming smiles. It was the cheerful beginnings of a festival in the American style.'

'We strung, in those ten days on our route across the continent, town after town, village after village, encrusted, rather like the cameos of a necklace, with a Christmas filigree of lights and banners and archways of greenery. It is not in the big cities that the European should see Christmas in America. It is in these small towns where the belief in doing "active good", especially at Christmas time, is so strong. Or it is in the clusters of houses miles from anywhere where the proud notice "thickly settled" reminds the motorist that after all this was a frontier not so long ago. It is in the single houses dotted on the mountain-sides, or in the forests, or on the vast empty plains, that the American Christmas seems to have such an admirable American meaning.'

'There were great floods that winter in the western states and, hour after hour, torrential rain streamed down across our window panes. Many times we had to turn back because the road was flooded. Communities were isolated and hundreds of small homes were swept away. And yet in almost every human habitation we passed someone had remembered to light the Christmas candles in the window, and hang the Christmas wreath upon the door'.

CHRISTMAS IN RUSSIA

'Official measures against the observance of Christmas were first taken in Russia only in 1929', said WALTER KOLARZ in a European Services talk. 'In that year the Soviet regime decided to complete the liquidation of the class enemy. The fight against religion and religious holidays was part of this new communist offensive. Christmas was formally abolished as a day of rest and the winter holidays of the

Russian schools were shifted in such a way as to make the celebration of Christmas impossible either on January 7 (according to the old style) or on December 25 (according to the new style). Instead of Christmas the Party organised a "Day of Industrialisation", which far from being a holiday was a day of shock-work in all factories. To make the mockery complete the workers received no earnings for their work on Industrialisation Day. Instead, the money was allocated to the state fund for industrialisation as a "voluntary gift". However, despite the fact that Christmas was officially banned, there was considerable absenteeism during the Christmas days in the industrial areas, and in the countryside Christmas was almost fully observed. There, there was, of course, no point in organising a Day of Industrialisation and in some places the party replaced it by a "Holiday of Socialist Culture". But the idea was so unsuccessful that it was soon dropped as was the Day of Industrialisation, and today nobody in Soviet Russia remembers the doubtful Christmas substitutes of the earlier period.'

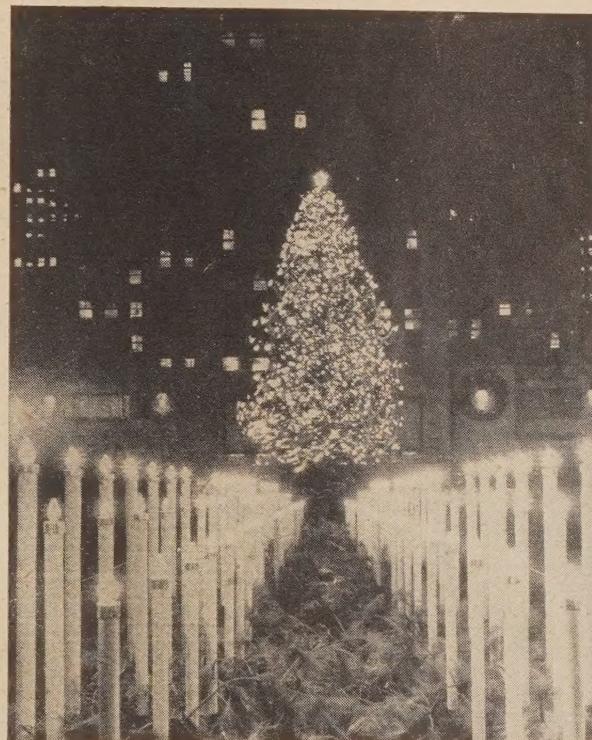
'The Communist Party extended its campaign against Christmas to everything that made the feast joyful. The Christmas trees, for instance, were described as a symbol of the "class enemy". Every year before Christmas the Soviet newspapers shed crocodile tears about the "irreparable damage" caused to the national economy by the cutting of trees serving a religious purpose which the communists condemned. Finally, the Government banned the sale of Christmas trees altogether. Also Santa Claus or Grandfather Frost, as he is called in Russia, was frowned upon and an anti-Christmas pamphlet printed in a mass edition said in all earnest that behind the back of Grandfather Frost were hiding the kulak and the priest.'

'But the efforts to destroy Christmas were of no avail. The anti-Christmas pamphlets and lectures, the conducted tours to anti-religious museums at Christmas time, and the anti-religious carnivals only helped to keep Christmas alive. From this the Russian Communists drew the unavoidable conclusions. They sounded the retreat in their struggle against Christmas and the Christmas trees. This tactical change was carried out on the quiet. On an unknown day, sometime in 1935, the local authorities and party branches were advised to put an end to anti-Christmas carnivals and to stop provoking believers at Christmas time.'

'For a while the trades unions, the Young Communist League and the League of Militant Godless still fought a rather half-hearted rear-guard action. They continued to organise anti-Christmas lectures which in most cases reached only convinced atheists. In fact, attendance at these lectures was so poor that ultimately they were stopped altogether.'

'During the war the Communist authorities viewed the "Christmas problem" from an entirely new angle. The men in charge of Soviet propaganda suddenly discovered that the spontaneous Christmas celebrations of the Russian Christians constituted no mean asset for the state. They could be used to show the world that everything was normal in the U.S.S.R. and that religion occupied an honourable place there.'

'The Communist Party and the anti-religious propagandists have also suffered defeat in the question of the Christmas trees. As early as 1935 the regime realised that it was better to sacrifice a few hectares of forest land each year than to keep alive a bitter grievance of the Russian



An eighty-five-foot Christmas tree outside the Rockefeller Centre, New York

people. Christmas trees were at first sold to private persons, but as time went on even trade-union and army clubs, Houses of Culture, and other official and semi-official institutions acquired trees and decorated them in the customary way around Christmas time. Also Father Christmas (Grandfather Frost) was fully rehabilitated; from a camouflage for kulaks he became as it were a respectable figure of Soviet society. He is now the main attraction at the big celebrations which take place in the Hall of Columns of the House of Trade Unions in Moscow, celebrations which every child in the Soviet capital is most keen to attend. Officially these celebrations are not Christmas celebrations but celebrations of the New Year, and also the Christmas trees are now officially described in Russia as "New Year trees".

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

"As with more normal zoological species, the behaviour of dragons is stereotyped and predictable but it is considerably affected by environment", said E. R. LEACH in a Home Service talk. "Consequently it has come to be supposed—mistakenly—that there are several distinct species of dragon such as maiden-eating dragons, treasure-guarding dragons, and royal ancestor dragons. St. George's dragon was a typical specimen of the maiden-eating variety. Here is the story:

Near the town of Silena in Lybia there was a pond infested by a dragon which sometimes approached the walls of the town and poisoned with his breath all who dwelt near. The citizens paid tribute to the monster. Each day a man or beast had to be offered, so that at last they gave up their children, sons and daughters, and none were spared. Finally the lot fell on the King's daughter. The monarch, horror-struck, offered in exchange for her his gold, his silver, and half his realm, but to no avail. Just then, St. George, who was a military tribune in the army of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, was passing through Silena and learned of the impending tragedy. He immediately mounted his horse, and, armed with his lance, rushed to encounter the dragon, whom he reached just as the monster was about to devour the royal virgin. When St. George had overthrown the dragon, the princess fastened her girdle round the beast's neck and he followed her like a dog led on a leash. The inhabitants of Silena were so impressed by this remarkable sight that 20,000 of them were immediately baptized Christians, whereupon St. George struck off the head of the monster.

"But who was St. George? The story goes that when martyred by Diocletian for refusing to abjure the Christian faith he was put to death seven times in succession—by diverse ghastly means—but, on each occasion except the last, he was miraculously restored to health. It seems doubtful whether there ever was an historical St. George. Some have tried to identify him with a certain Aryan Bishop of Alexandria who died in A.D. 362 but there exists in a Church in Syria an inscription dated A.D. 346 in which St. George is already referred to as a holy martyr. More frequently St. George has been identified as the nameless hero who, when the Emperor Diocletian issued his edicts against the Christians, rashly went round the city tearing down the notices. Naturally he was executed. Historical or not, St. George, as a saint, was widely worshipped throughout the Near East from the third century onwards. His adoption as patron Saint of England dates from the time of the Crusades.

"But how should an entirely fabulous saint manage to surround himself with such an extensive cult? The most likely answer is that the cult is earlier than St. George. There is satisfactory evidence that around the tenth century A.D. the stories told about St. George's mar-

tyrdom were almost identical to those told about the death of Adonis. The story of the death and resurrection of Adonis closely resembles the story of the death and resurrection of Christ. This explains why a sixteenth-century Christian commentator, Hospinian, should have asserted that "in allegory, St. George stands for Christ, the Dragon is the Devil, and the citizens of Silena are the human race redeemed by Christ". It is clearly this interpretation of the story which induced the Church to give its approval to a fable which had a close relationship to such pagan dragon stories as that of Perseus and Andromeda".

WHERE NELL GWYN BANKED

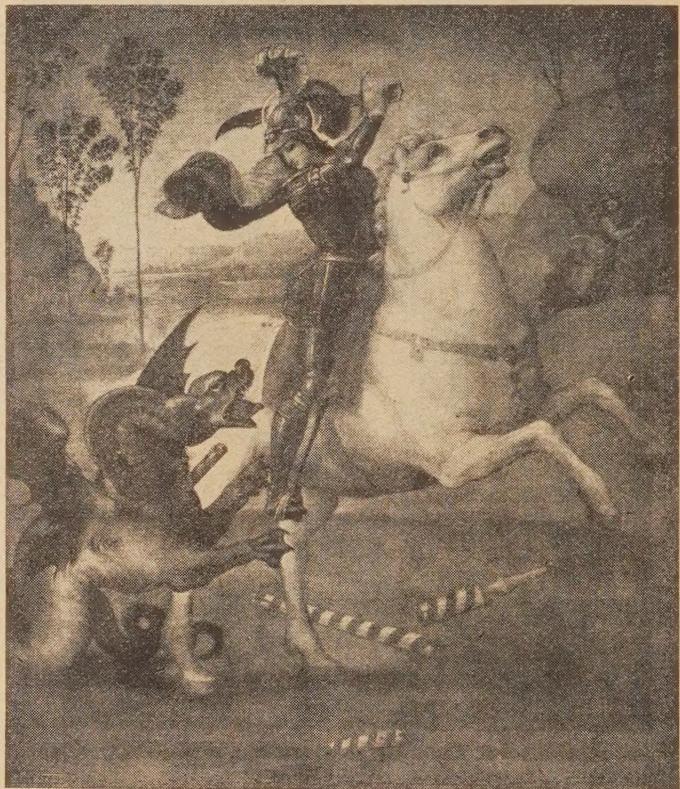
The private banking house of Glyn, Mills and Company—with the Sign of the Anchor, in Lombard Street, in the City of London—is celebrating this month its 200th anniversary. MICHAEL REYNOLDS, B.B.C. reporter, spoke about it in 'The Eye-witness'.

"The house now known as Glyn, Mills and Company", he said, "was founded by three men—Joseph Vere, a banker who had been in business in Lombard Street for some time previously; Richard Glyn, a drysalter of Hatton Garden; and Thomas Halifax, a clerk in Martin's Bank. The deed of partnership was signed on December 20, 1753, and business was started in the following January. Joseph Vere died not long afterwards, leaving no son to succeed him, and the business was carried on by his two partners. They were both knighted and both became Members of Parliament, each in turn served as Lord Mayor of London. Sir Thomas Halifax signalled his mayoralty by opposing the application to the City of London of the naval press gang system.

"In the seventeen-seventies there was a run on the bank which threatened to smash it; but the situation was restored by a Mr. William Mills, a linen merchant, who put his name down for a substantial amount and afterwards became a partner—thus starting a family connection which holds to this day. The Glyn connection continues, too. The present chairman is of the sixth generation of banking Glynys.

"The firm became a power during the first half of the nineteenth century, under the regime of George Carr Glyn, later Lord Wolverton. He took a prominent part in the development of railways both in Great Britain and abroad, and also had a great deal to do with the opening up of Canada.

"The house was then known as Glyn, Mills, Currie and Co. In 1923 it added yet another name to the list—that of Holts, the army agents. But when a year later the firm incorporated Childs and Co., it reverted, for the sake of simplicity, to the old style of Glyn Mills. Both Holts and Childs still operate as branches—Childs at its centuries-old address, number one Fleet Street, by Temple Bar. Childs claims to be the oldest banking house in the country; it dates back to the days of the first Elizabeth. During a visit there I was shown old ledgers containing entries relating to Oliver and Richard Cromwell, Charles II, William III and Mary II, John Churchill—later Duke of Marlborough—and Nell Gwyn. The Nell Gwyn papers are of particular interest. They include a receipt for £73 bearing the initials—very crudely formed—E.G., with a note in another hand, "Ellen Gwyn, her marks". "Pretty, witty Nell" could presumably read—as an actress, she had to memorise hundreds of lines of Dryden—but it seems she could not write her own name in full. I was also shown at Childs the accounts of Nell Gwyn's executors, which show that at the time of her death—in 1687, at the age of thirty-seven—her estate was nearly £7,000 in debt. This deficit was gradually paid off by her natural son, the Duke of St. Albans".



'St. George and the Dragon', from the painting by Raphael in the Louvre

The Reith Lectures

The Sciences and Man's Community*

By J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

FOR some moments during these lectures we have looked together into one of the rooms of the house called 'science'. This is a relatively quiet room that we know as quantum theory or atomic theory. The great girders which frame it, the lights and shadows and vast windows—these were the work of a generation our predecessor more than two decades ago. It is not wholly quiet. Young people visit it and study in it and pass on to other chambers; and from time to time someone rearranges a piece of the furniture to make the whole more harmonious; and many, as we have done, peer through its windows or walk through it as sight-seers. It is not so old but that one can hear the sound of the new wings being built nearby, where men walk high in the air to erect new scaffoldings, not unconscious of how far they may fall. All about there are busy workshops where the builders are active, and very near indeed are those of us who, learning more of the primordial structure of matter, hope some day for chambers as fair and lovely as that in which we have spent the years of our youth and our prime.

'A Vast House Indeed'

It is a vast house indeed. It does not appear to have been built upon any plan but to have grown as a great city grows. There is no central chamber, no one corridor from which all others debouch. All about the periphery men are at work studying the vast reaches of space and the state of affairs billions of years ago; studying the intricate and subtle but wonderfully meet mechanisms by which life proliferates, alters and endures; studying the reach of the mind and its ways of learning; digging deep into the atoms and the atoms within atoms and their unfathomed order. It is a house so vast that none of us know it, and even the most fortunate have seen most rooms only from the outside or by a fleeting passage, as in a king's palace open to visitors. It is a house so vast that there is not and need not be complete concurrence on where its chambers stop and those of the neighbouring mansions begin.

It is not arranged in a line nor a square nor a circle nor a pyramid, but with a wonderful randomness suggestive of unending growth and improvisation. Not many people live in the house, relatively speaking—perhaps if we count all its chambers and take residence requirements quite lightly, one tenth of one per cent. of all the people in this world—probably, by any reasonable definition, far fewer. And even those who live here live elsewhere also, live in houses where the rooms are not labelled atomic theory or genetics or the internal constitution of the stars, but quite different names like power and production and evil and beauty and history and children and the word of God.

We go in and out; even the most assiduous of us is not bound to this vast structure. One thing we find throughout the house: there are no locks; there are no shut doors; wherever we go there are the signs and usually the words of welcome. It is an open house, open to all comers.

The discoveries of science, the new rooms in this great house, have changed the way men think of things outside its walls. We have some glimmering now of the depth in time and the vastness in space of the physical world we live in. An awareness of how long our history and how immense our cosmos touches us even in simple earthly deliberations. We have learned from the natural history of the earth and from the story of evolution to have a sense of history, of time and change. We learn to talk of ourselves, and of the nature of the world and its reality as not wholly fixed in a silent quiet moment, but as unfolding with novelty and alteration, decay and new growth. We have understood something of the inner harmony and beauty of strange primitive cultures, and through this see the qualities of our own life in an altered perspective, and recognise its accidents as well as its inherent necessities. We are, I should think, not patriots less but patriots very differently for loving what is ours and understanding a little of the love of others for their lands and ways. We have begun to understand that it is not only in his rational life that man's psyche is intelligible, that even in what may appear to be his least rational actions and sentiments we may discover a new order. We have the beginnings of an understanding

of what it is in man, and more in simple organisms, that is truly heritable, and rudimentary clues as to how the inheritance occurs. We know, in surprising detail, what is the physical counterpart of the act of vision and of other modes of perception. Not one of these new ideas and new insights is so little, or has so short a reach in its bearing on the common understanding but that it alone could make a proper theme for 'Science and the Common Understanding'. Yet we have been, bearing in mind my limited area of experience, in that one room of the part of the house where physics is, in which I have for some years worked and taught.

In that one room—in that relatively quiet room where we have been together—we have found things quite strange for those who have not been there before, yet reminiscent of what we have seen in other houses and known in other days. We have seen that in the atomic world we have been led by experience to use descriptions and ideas that apply to the large-scale world of matter, to the familiar world of our school-day physics; ideas like the position of a body and its acceleration and its impulse and the forces acting on it; ideas like wave and interference; ideas like cause and probability. But what is new, what was not anticipated a half-century ago, is that, though to an atomic system there is a potential applicability of one or another of these ideas, in any real situation only some of these ways of description can be actual. This is because we need to take into account not merely the atomic system we are studying, but the means we use in observing it, and the fitness of these experimental means for defining and measuring selected properties of the system. All such ways of observing are needed for the whole experience of the atomic world; all but one are excluded in any actual experience. In the specific instance, there is a proper and consistent way to describe what the experience is; what it implies; what it predicts and thus how to deal with its consequences. But any such specific instance excludes by its existence the application of other ideas, other modes of prediction, other consequences. They are, we say, complementary to one another; atomic theory is in part an account of these descriptions and in part an understanding of the circumstances to which one applies, or another or another.

And so it is with man's life. He may be any of a number of things; he will not be all of them. He may be well versed, he may be a poet, he may be a creator in one or more than one science; he will not be all kinds of man or all kinds of scientist; and he will be lucky if he has a bit of familiarity outside the room in which he works.

So it is with the great antinomies that through the ages have organised and yet disunited man's experience: the antinomy between the ceaseless change and wonderful novelty and the perishing of all earthly things, and the eternity which inheres in every happening; in the antinomy between growth and order, between the spontaneous and changing and irregular and the symmetrical and balanced; in the related antinomy between freedom and necessity; between action, the life of the will, and observation and analysis and the life of reason; between the question 'how?' and the questions 'why?' and 'to what end?'; between the causes that derive from natural law, from unvarying regularities in the natural world, and those other causes that express purposes and define goals and ends.

No Written Rules

So it is in the antinomy between the individual and the community; man who is an end in himself and man whose tradition, whose culture, whose works, whose words have meaning in terms of other men and his relations to them. All our experience has shown that we can neither think, nor in any true sense live, without reference to these antinomic modes. We cannot in any sense be both the observers and the actors in any specific instance, or we shall fail properly to be either one or the other; yet we know that our life is built of these two modes, is part free and part inevitable, is part creation and part discipline, is part acceptance and part effort. We have no written rules that assign us to these ways; but we know that only folly and death of the spirit results when we deny one or the other, when we erect one as total and

absolute and make the others derivative and secondary. We recognise this when we live as men. We talk to one another; we philosophise; we admire great men and their moments of greatness; we read; we study; we recognise and love in a particular act that happy union of the generally incompatible. With all of this we learn to use some reasonable part of the full register of man's resources.

We are, of course, an ignorant lot; even the best of us knows how to do only a very few things well; and of what is available in knowledge of fact, whether of science or of history, only the smallest part is in any one man's knowing.

The greatest of the changes that science has brought is the acuity of change; the greatest novelty the extent of novelty. Short of rare times of great disaster, civilisations have not known such rapid alteration in the conditions of their life, such rapid flowering of many varied sciences, such rapid changes in the ideas we have about the world and one another. What has been true in the days of a great disaster or great military defeat for one people at one time is true for all of us now, in the sense that our ends have little in common with our beginnings. Within a lifetime what we learned at school has been rendered inadequate by new discoveries and new inventions; the ways that we learned in childhood are only very meagrely adequate to the issues that we must meet in maturity.

The Illusion of Universal Knowledge

In fact, of course, the notion of universal knowledge has always been an illusion; but it is an illusion fostered by the monistic view of the world in which a few great central truths determine in all its wonderful and amazing proliferation everything else that is true. We are not today tempted to search for these keys that unlock the whole of human knowledge and of man's experience. We know that we are ignorant; we are well taught it, and the more surely and deeply we know our own job the better able we are to appreciate the full measure of our pervasive ignorance. We know that these are inherent limits, compounded, no doubt, and exaggerated by that sloth and that complacency without which we would not be men at all.

But knowledge rests on knowledge; what is new is meaningful because it departs slightly from what was known before; this is a world of frontiers, where even the liveliest of actors or observers will be absent most of the time from most of them. Perhaps this sense was not so sharp in the village—that village which we have learned a little about but probably do not understand too well—the village of slow change and isolation and fixed culture which evokes our nostalgia even if not our full comprehension. Perhaps in the villages men were not so lonely; perhaps they found in each other a fixed community, a fixed and only slowly growing store of knowledge—a single world. Even that we may doubt, for there seem to be always in the culture of such times and places vast domains of mystery, if not unknowable, then imperfectly known, endless and open.

As for ourselves in these times of change, of ever-increasing knowledge, of collective power and individual impotence, of heroism and of drudgery, of progress and of tragedy, we too are brothers. And if we, who are the inheritors of two millenia of Christian tradition, understand that for us we have come to be brothers second by being children first, we know that in vast parts of the world where there has been no Christian tradition, and with men who never have been and never may be Christian in faith there is nevertheless a bond of brotherhood. We know this not only because of the almost universal ideal of human brotherhood and human community; we know it at first hand from the more modest, more diverse, more fleeting associations which are the substance of our life. The ideal of brotherhood, the ideal of fraternity in which all men, wicked and virtuous, wretched and fortunate, are banded together has its counterpart in the experience of communities, not ideal, not universal, imperfect, impermanent, as different from the ideal and as reminiscent of it as are the ramified branches of science from the ideal of a unitary, all-encompassing science of the eighteenth century.

Each of us knows from his own life how much even a casual and limited association of men goes beyond him in knowledge, in understanding, in humanity and in power. Each of us, from a friend or a book or by concerting of the little we know with what others know, has broken the iron circle of his frustration. Each of us has asked help and been given it, and within our measure each of us has offered it. Each of us knows the great new freedom sensed almost as a miracle, that men banded together for some finite purpose experience from the power of their common effort. We are likely to remember the

times of the last war, where the common danger brought forth in soldier, in worker, in scientist, and engineer a host of new experiences of the power and the comfort in even bleak undertakings, of common, concerted, co-operative life. Each of us knows how much he has been transcended by the group of which he has been or is a part; each of us has felt the solace of other men's knowledge to stay his own ignorance, of other men's wisdom to stay his folly, of other men's courage to answer his doubts or his weakness.

These are the fluid communities, some of long duration when circumstances favoured—like the political party or many a trades union—some fleeting and vivid, encompassing in the time of their duration a moment only of the member's life; and in our world at least they are ramified and improvised, living and dying, growing and falling off almost as a form of life itself. This may be more true of the United States than of any other country. Certainly the bizarre and comical aspects impressed de Toqueville more than a century ago when he visited our land and commented on the readiness with which men would band together: to improve the planting of a town, or for political reform, or for the pursuit or inter-exchange of knowledge, or just for the sake of banding together, because they liked one another or disliked someone else. Circumstances may have exaggerated the role of the societies, of the fluid and yet intense communities in the United States; yet these form a common pattern for our civilisation. It brought men together in the Royal Society and in the French Academy and in the Philosophical Society that Franklin founded, in family, in platoon, on a ship, in the laboratory, in almost everything but a really proper club.

We tend to think of these communities, no less than of the larger brotherhood of man, as made up of individuals, as composed of them as an atom is of its ingredients. We think similarly of general laws and broad ideas as made up of the instances which illustrate them, and from an observation of which we may have learned them.

Yet this is not the whole. The individual event, the act, goes far beyond the general law. It is a sort of intersection of many generalities, harmonising them in one instance as they cannot be harmonised in general. And we as men are not only the ingredients of our communities; we are their intersection, making a harmony which does not exist between the communities except as we, the individual men, may create it and reveal it. So much of what we think, our acts, our judgments of beauty and of right and wrong, come to us from our fellow men that what would be left were we to take all this away would be neither recognisable nor human. We are men because we are part of, but not because only part of, communities; and the attempt to understand man's brotherhood in terms only of the individual man is as little likely to describe our world as is the attempt to describe general laws as the summary of their instances. These are indeed two complementary views, neither reducible to the other, no more reducible than is the electron as wave to the electron as particle.

A New Possibility

And this is the mitigant of our ignorance. It is true that none of us will know very much; and most of us will see the end of our days without understanding in all its detail and beauty the wonders uncovered even in a single branch of a single science. Most of us will not even know, as a member of any intimate circle, anyone who has such knowledge; but it is also true that, although we are sure not to know everything and rather likely not to know very much, we can know anything that is known to man, and may, with luck and sweat, even find out some things that have not before been known to him. This possibility, which, as a universal condition of man's life is new, represents today a high and determined hope, not yet a reality; it is for us in England and in the United States not wholly remote or unfamiliar. It is one of the manifestations of our belief in equality, that belief which could perhaps better be described as a commitment to unparalleled diversity and unevenness in the distribution of attainments, knowledge, talent, and power.

This open access to knowledge, these unlocked doors and signs of welcome, are a mark of a freedom as fundamental as any. They give a freedom to resolve difference by converse, and, where converse does not unite, to let tolerance compose diversity. This would appear to be a freedom barely compatible with modern political tyranny. The multitude of communities, the free association for converse or for common purpose, are acts of creation. It is not merely that without them the individual is the poorer; without them a part of human life, not more nor less fundamental than the individual, is foreclosed. It is a cruel

and humourless sort of pun that so powerful a present form of modern tyranny should call itself by the very name of a belief in community, by a word 'communism' which in other times evoked memories of villages and village inns and of artisans concerting their skills, and of men of learning content with anonymity. But perhaps only a malignant end can follow the systematic belief that all communities are one community; that all truth is one truth; that all experience is compatible with all other; that total knowledge is possible; that all that is potential can exist as actual. This is not man's fate; this is not his path; to force him on it makes him resemble not that divine image of the all-knowing and all-powerful but the helpless, iron-bound prisoner of a dying world. The open society, the unrestricted access to knowledge, the unplanned and uninhibited association of men for its furtherance—these are what may make a vast, complex, ever-growing, ever-changing, ever more specialised and expert technological world nevertheless a world of human community.

So it is with the unity of science—that unity that is far more a unity of comparable dedication than a unity of common total understanding. This heartening phrase, 'the unity of science', often tends to evoke a wholly false picture, a picture of a few basic truths, a few critical techniques, methods, and ideas, from which all discoveries and understanding of science derive; a sort of central exchange, access to which will illuminate the atoms and the galaxies, the genes and the sense organs. The unity of science is based rather on just such a community as I have described. All parts of it are open to all of us, and this is no merely formal invitation. The history of science is rich in example of the fruitfulness of bringing two sets of techniques, two sets of ideas, developed in separate contexts for the pursuit of new truth, into touch with one another. The sciences fertilise each other; they grow by contact and by common enterprise. Once again, this means that the scientist may profit from learning about any other science; it does not mean that he must learn about them all. It means that the unity is a potential unity, the unity of the things that might be brought together and might throw light one on the other. It is not global or total or hierarchical.

Even in science, and even without visiting the room in its house called atomic theory, we are again and again reminded of the complementary traits in our own life, even in our own professional life. We are nothing without the work of others our predecessors, others our teachers, others our contemporaries. Even when, in the measure of our adequacy and our fullness, new insight and new order are created, we are still nothing without others. Yet we are more.

There is a similar duality in our relations to wider society. For society our work means many things: pleasure, we hope, for those who follow it; instruction for those who perhaps need it; but also and far more widely, it means a common power, a power to achieve that which could not be achieved without knowledge. It means the cure of illness

and the alleviation of suffering; it means the easing of labour and the widening of the readily accessible frontiers of experience, of communication and of instruction. It means, in an earthy way, the power of betterment—that riddled word. We are today anxiously aware that the power to change is not always necessarily good.

As new instruments of war, of newly massive terror, add to the ferocity and totality of warfare, we understand that it is a special mark and problem of our age that man's ever-present preoccupation with improving his lot, with alleviating hunger and poverty and exploitation, must be brought into harmony with the over-riding need to limit and largely to eliminate resort to organised violence between nation and nation. The increasingly expert destruction of man's spirit by the power of police, more wicked if not more awful than the ravages of nature's own hand, is another such power, good only if never to be used.

We regard it as proper and just that the patronage of science by society is in large measure based on the increased power which knowledge gives. If we are anxious that the power so given and so obtained be used with wisdom and with love of humanity, that is an anxiety we share with almost everyone. But we also know how little of the deep new knowledge which has altered the face of the world, which has changed—and increasingly and ever more profoundly must change—man's views of the world, resulted from a quest for practical ends or an interest in exercising the power that knowledge gives. For most of us, in most of those moments when we were most free of corruption, it has been the beauty of the world of nature and the strange and compelling harmony of its order, that has sustained, inspirited and led us. That also is as it should be. And if the forms in which society provides and exercises its patronage leave these incentives strong and secure, new knowledge will never stop as long as there are men.

We know that our work is rightly both an instrument and an end. A great discovery is a thing of beauty; and our faith—our binding, quiet faith—is that knowledge is good and good in itself. It is also an instrument; it is an instrument for our successors, who will use it to probe elsewhere and more deeply; it is an instrument for technology, for the practical arts, and for man's affairs. So it is with us as scientists; so it is with us as men. We are at once instrument and end, discoverers and teachers, actors and observers. We understand, as we hope others understand, that in this there is a harmony between knowledge in the sense of science, that specialised and general knowledge which it is our purpose to uncover, and the community of man. We, like all men, are among those who bring a little light to the vast unending darkness of man's life and world. For us as for all men, change and eternity, specialisation and unity, instrument and final purpose, community and individual man alone, complementary each to the other, both require and define our bonds and our freedom.

—Home Service

Human Nature in Politics—IV

By SIR LEWIS NAMIER

THE title of this series reproduces that of a famous book published forty-five years ago: *Human Nature in Politics*, by Graham Wallas. Its first sentence read: 'The study of politics is just now (1908) in a curiously unsatisfactory position'. 'The thinkers of the past', wrote Graham Wallas, 'from Plato to Bentham and Mill, had each his own view of human nature, and they made those views the basis of their speculations on government'; but Graham Wallas' own contemporaries, he complained, no longer prefaced their treatises on political science by a definition of human nature, and indeed, he found it difficult to discover whether they possessed any conception of it at all.

Not that he commended the naive, dogmatic definitions supplied by earlier writers: for instance, by the Utilitarians who thought they had found the key to man's behaviour in the hedonistic principle of his seeking pleasure and shunning pain, or by the classical economists with their *homo oeconomicus* desirous to obtain additional wealth with the least sacrifice—systems based on the assumption of man's essential rationality. 'When we see the actions of a man', wrote Macaulay in

1829, 'we know with certainty what he thinks his interest to be'. It was thus assumed that man always acts on a valid, reasonable inference of how best to achieve a preconceived end. Graham Wallas' own conclusion about human nature in politics was that 'most of the political opinions of most men are the result, not of reasoning tested by experience, but of unconscious or half-conscious inference fixed by habit'; and he exhorted students of politics to fight against the tendency to 'exaggerate the intellectuality of mankind'.

Graham Wallas' criticism of the *homo sapiens* in politics won an easy victory; the time was ripe for his thrust, and the silence of writers about human nature in politics, of which he complained, may have been a dim, uneasy preognition of his analysis. By now we have travelled a great deal further along Graham Wallas' path. For him atavistic memories and mental habits formed the stock material of man's unconscious thinking. Since then we have learnt about fixations in both individuals and groups, about psychological displacements and projections, and the externalisation of unresolved inner conflicts. A man's relation, for instance, to his father or to his nurse may determine the

pattern of his later political conduct or of his intellectual preoccupations without his being in the least conscious of the connection; and self-deception concerning the origin and character of his seemingly intellectual tenets enables him to deceive others: the intensity of his hidden passion sharpens his mental faculties and may even create the appearances of cold, clear-sighted objectivity.

The Passion Behind the Argument

I remember how many years ago, when a perfect case in support of a political thesis was presented to a very wise friend of mine, he replied: 'I should be convinced by the argument if I did not know the passion which is behind it'. He was right to be cautious though he did not apprehend the source of that passion; yet even the recognition of it does not necessarily prove that the thesis was wrong. Or to take a historical example: a sentence in Talleyrand's *Memoirs*, seemingly unrelated to politics, in a flash illuminates one aspect of his political conduct. He writes: 'I say in order to have said it once, and hoping never to think of it again, that I am perhaps the only man of distinguished birth . . . who has not for a single week of his life known the joy of staying under his parental roof'. Here was bitterness which he, writing at the age of over sixty, wished he could overcome. Neglected by his parents and brought up by dependents who extolled to him the greatness of his family, he went through life a very conscious *grand seigneur* who associated by preference with inferiors and, devoid of any feeling for his own class—its primary representatives were to him his parents—contributed with cold indifference to its downfall.

Examples of this kind, positive and negative, to be found in the life of any man, make us less prone to accept at face value interpretations of beliefs, principles, and actions, even if given in all sincerity. Unconscious promptings combine with rational thought, and in every action there are inscrutable components. Undoubtedly one of the most important lines of advance for history, and especially for biography, will be through a knowledge of modern psychology. Still, care is required in applying it. The unqualified practitioner must not be let loose, not even on the dead, and a mere smattering of psychology is likely to result in superficial, hasty judgments framed in a nauseating jargon. But even to the expert, available psychological data yield at best a fragmentary picture. Lastly, there is pragmatic validity in conscious thought unaffected by psychological origins; and action, however prompted, speaks its own language of unmistakable reality. Although we know that man's actions are mostly conditioned by factors other than reason, in practice we have to assume their rational character until the contrary has been specifically established; and when dealing with the mysteries of the human mind, we had best say with the preacher: 'And now, brethren, let us boldly face the difficulty, and then pass it over'. Yet awareness of the vast depths, unprobed and largely unfathomable, enjoins on us both humility and caution in approaching the problem of human nature in politics.

Even worse than our position with regard to the psychology of individuals, the politicians, is that regarding groups, the masses, the crowd in action. We are as yet merely groping for an approach to mass psychology: some of the positive chapters of Graham Wallas' book now strike one as almost as naive as the beliefs he effectively destroyed. We do not even know some of the means whereby men communicate thoughts or emotions to each other. I remember a remark which in 1911 I heard from Sir Reginald Wingate: he said that after all the years in the Sudan it remained a mystery for him how news travelled among the natives—even heliographs would not have enabled them to transmit it with that speed. *La grande peur*, the panic which seized the French countryside in July 1789 and consolidated the Great Revolution, is the outstanding example of a nation-wide psychological upheaval; but smaller tremors of that kind can be traced in almost every revolution. Besides, there is what in current terminology would be described as the 'intellectual climaté', dimly communicated and developed by some kind of unconscious telepathy, which seems to affect the great mass of the population.

Very seldom do we come across in history powerful political movements, such as the revolution of 1688, planned and executed with a clear purpose: this was a rising of politically conscious men against the civil and spiritual tyranny of the Stuarts. In most cases the essence of political mass movements is shrouded in darkness. It is hard to believe that on the Paris barricades men died in 1830 in order to preserve the Charter, or in February 1848 in order to obtain an extension of the franchise; more probably behind these two risings were much the same forces as behind that of June, 1848, described by Alexis

de Tocqueville as the greatest and most singular insurrection in French history. And singular it certainly was, in that 100,000 insurgents fought with remarkable skill and cohesion, though, to quote Tocqueville once more, 'without a war-cry, without chiefs, or a standard'; or in simpler terms: without intellectuals having stamped their doctrines or ideas on the rising. George Meredith calls it an ironical habit of mind to believe that the wishes of men are expressed by their utterances; even more ironical, or naive, would it be to judge of the essence of mass movements by the pronouncements or professions of those who manage to filch them. So far we have hardly reached the fringes of the field of mass psychology, the most basic factor in history. All we can do is to try faithfully to state discernible facts, pose problems, but be chary of drawing conclusions.

One inevitable result of heightened psychological awareness is, however, a change of attitude towards so-called political ideas. To treat them as the offspring of pure reason would be to assign to them a parentage about as mythological as that of Pallas Athene. What matters most is the underlying emotions, the music, to which ideas are a mere libretto, often of very inferior quality; and once the emotions have ebbed, the ideas, established high and dry, become doctrine, or at best innocuous clichés. Even the principles of the Glorious Revolution, after victory had been irrevocably won and they had changed into an accepted profession of faith, came to sound somewhat hollow. I have been blamed by a very friendly and appreciative critic of my work for taking the mind out of history, for discerning self-interest or ambition in men, but showing insufficient appreciation of political principles and of abstract ideals to which their votaries try to make reality conform. That criticism is so relevant to the subject of my talk that I propose to make it the text of what I have still to say.

To start with taking the mind out of history. It certainly seems impossible to attach to conscious political thought the importance which was ascribed to it a hundred, or even fifty, years ago. History is primarily, and to a growing extent, made by man's mind and nature; but his mind does not work with the rationality that was once deemed its noblest attribute—which does not, however, mean that it necessarily works any worse. Strictly logical conclusions based on insufficient data are a deadly danger, especially when pride is taken in the performance; and our data in politics are necessarily exiguous and fragmentary. Even within that range, the facts we can at any time consciously muster and master in a quasi-scientific manner are a mere fraction of what is present in our subconscious mind. The less, therefore, man clogs the free play of his mind with political doctrine and dogma, the better for his thinking. And the irrational is not necessarily unreasonable: it may only be that we cannot explain it, or that we misinterpret it, in terms of our conscious thought. An absurd proof does not necessarily invalidate a contention: wrong labels are sometimes stuck on produce of unknown provenance.

I came across a striking case of that kind some forty years ago, when working at Yale on the correspondence of Ezra Stiles, an eighteenth-century president of the college. A New England doctor reported to him exciting news: he had discovered that the Red Indians were of Mongol extraction; but being that day in a hurry, he was going to produce his evidence in his next letter. This was indeed exciting—it reminded me of the story of Fermat's famous mathematical theorem; so I went in search of that next letter; but as the papers were not yet properly arranged and indexed, it took me some time to trace it. When I did, this I found was his evidence: Noah had three sons, Japhet, Shem, and Ham, and wherever we go we find that the descendants of Ham serve those of Japhet; but the Red Indians had no Negro slaves: hence they must be descended from Shem. Funny, isn't it? In time I have come to think differently. The doctor, a trained observer, must unconsciously have based his conclusion on similarly unconscious observations; but being a New England Puritan, he sought and found his evidence in the Old Testament. Every age and every country has a cherished lore and will draw on it in season and out of season; and political principles are often as irrelevant as the argument of the doctor.

Human Motives

As for human motives: tell a story without attributing any, and they will be readily supplied by others from the common stock. The 'economic motive' of the Victorians and the 'will to power' of the Germans are current coin, and acquisitive instincts or ambition offer plausible explanations of human actions, which can be contrasted with the unselfish pursuit of ideals. But is there such a clear division in the depths of the human mind and nature? Fear, conscious or unconscious,

is often the impelling force behind money-making, over-eating, intellectual pursuits, or endeavours to benefit humanity. And even behind money-making there may be a creative urge or thought for the community. On the other hand, is there no ambition, and no *hubris*, in the man who tries to make reality conform to his so-called ideals? To react against cruelty, injustice, or oppression is one thing; to have a nostrum for securing man's freedom or his happiness is a very different matter. And 'idealism' or 'idealist' are misnomers when bestowed merely because self-interest or ambition is not writ large on the surface.

I remember a story from that admirable book, *The Ladies of Alderley*. In September 1841 Mrs. Stanley, in a letter to her mother-in-law, expressed her dislike for a house because it was 'very romantic'. 'I don't understand' wrote back Lady Stanley 'why you should wish it not to be *very romantic*'. Mrs. Stanley replied: 'When I said romantic I meant damp'. Probably it was not merely creepers and thatched roofs which made these terms synonymous for her: the affinity of sound between 'romantic' and 'rheumatic' may have played its part. So it does in the frequent confusion between an 'ideologue' and an 'idealist'. And what shams and disasters political ideologies are apt to be, we surely have had opportunity to learn. Never have the popular masses been worse enslaved than under what calls itself 'the dictatorship of the proletariat', nor has ever worse scum wielded power than under the nazi regime proclaiming 'the rule of the élite'. But even far less

cruel or fierce political ideologies have played havoc with human welfare. There is a fixity in them which makes them outlive even the few factors to which they were originally correlated; which is the reason why radicals who rely on systems so often produce mere junk—*des visielleries: ils ne changent pas leur baggage*—they do not repack their ideological baggage. Moreover, almost all ideologies vastly overrate man's capacity to foresee the consequences and repercussions of ideals forced on reality.

I conclude my broadcast, the last in the series, by reading to you once more the sentences with which Mr. Hampshire opened it:

There is a tired lull in English politics, and argument on general principles has largely died. This may be taken as a sign of political health; for there is the view that abstract arguments and general ideas must mislead in politics: better to look for practical solutions of concrete problems, one by one, as they arise, and to forget programmes and ideals. This has, on the whole, been the conservative attitude; but both political parties are now in this sense conservative, tied to day-to-day expedients.

On the factual side, this statement by Mr. Hampshire seems on the whole sound; and having carefully read the rest of his broadcast, I can only wish that our present condition, which he ascribed to weariness and I to greater national maturity, may long continue undisturbed by the workings of political philosophy.—*Third Programme*

Three Poems

The Eve of Christmas

It was the evening before the night
That Jesus turned from dark to light.

Joseph was walking round and round,
And yet he moved not on the ground.

He looked into the heavens, and saw
The pole stood silent, star on star.

He looked into the forest: there
The leaves hung dead upon the air.

He looked into the sea, and found
It frozen, and the lively fishes bound.

And in the sky, the birds that sang
Not in feathered clouds did hang.

Said Joseph: 'What is this silence all?'
An angel spoke: 'It is no thrall,

But is a sign of great delight:
The Prince of Love is born this night'.

And Joseph said: 'Where may I find
This wonder?'—'He is all mankind.

Look, he is both farthest, nearest,
Highest and lowest, of all men the dearest'.

Then Joseph moved, and found the stars
Moved with him, and the evergreen airs,

The birds went flying, and the main
Flowed with its fishes once again.

And everywhere they went, they cried:
'Love lives, when all had died'!

In Excelsis Gloria!

JAMES KIRKUP

Poem in Winter

Today the children begin to hope for snow
And look in the sky for auguries of it.
It is not for such omens that we wait,
Our world may not be settled by the slow
Falling of flakes to lie across our thought.

And even if the snow comes down indeed
We still shall stand behind a pane of glass
Untouched by it, and watch the children press
Their image on the drifts the sky has laid
Upon a winter they think they have made.

This is a wise illusion. Better to
Believe the near world is created by
A wish, a shaping hand, a certain eye,
Than hide in the mind's corner as we do
As though there were no world, no fall of snow.

ELIZABETH JENNINGS

Live and Love

A tracery of dispersed veins
sustains the wheeling rose of blood
light transfused myriad-spoked
the conflict of sun and ice

Saving where we should spend
Sleeping in order to dream
And all we find in the end
Is an old boot in the stream

the apex in the ice. The herons
have left the busy vale
Heraclitus in his white robe
has passed us unobserved

Never seek to know your neighbour
Live out of hand love out of need
Let it be your last endeavour
To keep the cold outside the shroud.

HERBERT READ

'That Great Luminary of Architecture'

R. WITTKOWER on the 3rd Earl of Burlington

LORD BURLINGTON cannot be called a great man, or even a great architect; yet by the sheer force of his character and conviction he gave a whole period the stamp of his personality in matters of taste. He is the most complete representative of the early eighteenth-century ideal of the virtuoso and man of reason, and it is mainly as such that I want to discuss him here.

He was born on April 25, 1694, and his active life comprises roughly four decades. During the formative years, between about 1712 and 1720, the ideals to which he devoted his life took shape. There is some justification in mentioning the year 1712; in that year we find the young man of eighteen buying pictures; to our knowledge, the first purchase on his own account. And in the same year Handel dedicated to him his opera 'Teseo'. Handel, who had lived as a guest in Burlington House, must have found him a sincere and intelligent lover of music, painting, and poetry, and I have reason to believe that this was more than mere flattery. Burlington was distinguished from other youths of his rank by the fact that he began quite early to use his formidable wealth, his boundless energy and ambition, to one end: to become the leading virtuoso in England; and this he achieved during the next eight years.

We may assume that by 1716 he had added to his accomplishments a knowledge of sculpture and architecture, for in that year his 'correct judgment' in 'painting, sculpture, architecture, and music', was praised in the dedication to a new edition of Dryden's translation of Dufresnoy's *Art of Painting*. This work itself is an interesting pointer to the kind of literature on which Burlington formed his 'correct judgment'; for, like Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, Dufresnoy's *Art of Painting* familiarised the English reader with the tenets of French classicism, based on reason and on 'the taste and manner of the ancients'. Nor can we doubt that he was deeply impressed by Lord Shaftesbury's writings. According to Shaftesbury, a virtuoso is a man who has taste; that is, one who is attuned to that universal harmony the existence of which must be confirmed by reason. Since Shaftesbury revived the Platonic concept of the unity of Beauty, Truth, and Goodness, 'Virtuosoship' was for him a moral attitude to life. 'The Science of Virtuoso's and that of *Virtus* itself', he wrote, 'become, in a manner, one and the same'. And since he concluded that 'what is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable; what is harmonious and proportionable is true; and what is at once both beautiful and true is of consequence agreeable and good', he implicitly advocated a harmonious and proportionable—that is, a stoic and anti-enthusiastic—conduct of life for the man of taste. It seems that Burlington had resolved to live up to Shaftesbury's ideal.

This conception of the virtuoso determined Burlington's interests; it underlay his sober and rational principles as a practising architect, and formed his character: his equanimity was probably as much acquired by self-imposed discipline as inherited. What had been a philosophical theory with Shaftesbury became with Burlington a practical rule of conduct; he made correct taste a moral issue in actual life, and herein lay the strength of his influence on other people. He consequently also felt in duty bound to use his wealth for the general good, which during these early years meant for him to help bring about the formation of a 'national taste' of which Shaftesbury had talked. This Burlington envisaged as a union of all the arts reborn in the spirit of

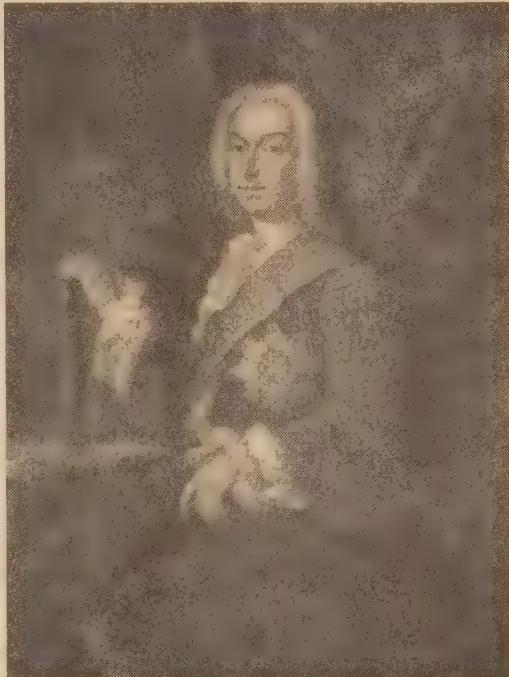
classical antiquity. In the years before 1720 he made formidable, if partly ill-advised, efforts to promote an all-round Renaissance of the arts. But his expectations were not fulfilled by his chosen sculptor, the Italian Guelfi, nor by his architect Colin Campbell, nor even by William Kent, whom he had first patronised as a painter in the Roman grand manner.

The attempt to acclimatise Italian opera in England also ended in failure. Burlington's ardent support of Italian music is not, I think, sufficiently remembered. When he returned from the Grand Tour in 1715, he had in his retinue three Italian musicians: Filippo Amadei and the brothers Pietro and Prospero Castrucci. (Pietro became leading violinist in Handel's orchestra.) Burlington must have brought them over in the conviction that they would greatly strengthen the cause of the Italian opera. His hopes seemed to come true when in 1720 the Royal Academy of Music was constituted, with himself one of the founder members. Forthwith he helped to induce Bononcini, the composer, and Rolli, the librettist, to come to England; and he concerned himself with the engagement of Italian singers. This appears from an unpublished letter of Handel's in which he reports on negotiations with the three famous singers, Senesino, Berselli, and Guizzardi. But the Academy was an ill-starred enterprise. There were financial difficulties, rivalries, and quarrels, the public was violently taking sides. Into this atmosphere 'The Beggar's Opera' dropped like a bomb. Gay's and Pepusch's enormous success, and the good laugh they raised against 'the outlandish opera' was more than the Academy could stand. It was dissolved after eight troubled years.

Burlington's dream was buried, but he never changed his allegiance. When he went to York for the opening of the Assembly Rooms which he had built, he took Senesino along. Faustina, one of the *prima donnas* and a faithful friend of Handel, was a favourite at Burlington House. Pope and all the Burlingtonians stood unwaveringly by the Italian opera. Gay was the only renegade.

To Burlington this must have appeared as a moral shortcoming. Gay, who had been one of Burlington's earliest *protégés*, gradually ceased to visit Burlington House, and from the summer of 1730 onwards he was no longer admitted within its walls. This is the more remarkable since we know from his correspondence that the Earl did not break off relations easily. Among his lifelong friends were Doctors Mead, Arbuthnot and Sloane, General (later Field-Marshal) Wade, Garrick and his wife Violetta the dancer, Pope, and Bishop Berkeley. In 1750, three years before his death, the Bishop wrote in a wistful note from Cloyne: 'In this remote corner I am haunted with a taste for good company and fine arts that I got at Burlington House. Even the difficult Pope did not shake his constancy; one of the poet's frequent bursts of temper, Burlington countered with the soothing words: 'From one that I love and value as I do you, even rebukes are pleasant, as they must proceed from friendship'.

Burlington's high hopes of creating a flourishing national style, which for him meant a classical Italianate one, did not last. Already from 1717 onwards he had begun to shift his interests to architecture, and in 1721 he emerged as an architect in his own right with three important designs: that for the Dormitory of Westminster School, for Petersham Lodge in Surrey, and Tottenham Park in Wiltshire. These designs open the second period of his life—eleven years of intense architectural



Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington, who died two hundred years ago

activity; and in these years he slowly pushed all other interests into the background. This narrowing and, at the same time, deepening of his interests is reflected in the works dedicated to him. While until 1721 he was honoured by dedications of librettos and literary products, a long and revealing list of architectural works inscribed to him is opened in 1727 with Kent's *Designs of Inigo Jones*. He had himself stimulated and supported with advice and money many of these works, including Robert Castell's *Villas of the Ancients* of 1728 and Isaac Ware's edition of Palladio, published in 1738. In addition, Burlington's judiciously chosen library and the vast collection of drawings by Palladio and Inigo Jones were at the service of his friends and collaborators.

The English world began to look to Burlington as the arbiter of taste in architectural matters. His eminently reasonable architecture with its constant reference to Palladio and Inigo Jones, and with the image of Roman architecture like a shining beacon in the distance, was perfectly suited to the temper of the Augustan age; and, moreover, the essence of this architecture could be diffused by rational means. Soon a veritable avalanche of cheap books appeared, which helped to transform the intellectual, aristocratic, and somewhat exclusive architecture of Burlington and his close circle into a truly popular idiom. The result was that most characteristic feature of so many English towns—the modest Georgian house. The unsentimental pocket-book with its tabulated rules of correct proportions helped to produce a homogeneous architecture of considerable quality. Burlington was, after all, instrumental in bringing about a new national style—a typically English Palladian architecture.

In the summer of 1732 Burlington's most dogmatically classical work, the Assembly Rooms at York, was opened to the public. Less than a year later, the *Gentleman's Magazine* announced his resignation from all court offices. These two events marked the beginning of a new period in the Earl's life. During the last two decades he lived more and more in retirement, but he unwaveringly stood by his ideals. Although he hardly practised architecture himself, he held all the strings in his hands. In the virtuoso atmosphere of Burlington House, and of his Chiswick Villa which he had built during the 'twenties, he trained a young generation of architects. He preferred them unspoiled; Henry Flitcroft had been a simple carpenter in Burlington House; by 1726 he was made Clerk of the Works at Whitehall. Isaac Ware had been apprenticed to a chimney-sweep; Burlington paid for his education and travels; by 1728 he was Clerk of the Works at the Tower. William Kent, the life-long friend, was thoroughly instructed by Burlington in the principles of true architecture. Having firmly established these men, the executors of his ideas, in public positions, and with most of the important commissions going to them through his agency, he could keep quietly in the background.

The Burlington cult had already formed during the 'twenties, when his circle hailed him as the rejuvenator of English architecture. The



The Assembly Rooms, York; Lord Burlington's 'most dogmatically classical work', opened to the public in 1732

A. F. Kersting

world at large soon acknowledged his distinction. Scipione Maffei, writer and scholar of international standing, called him *Il Palladio e il Jones de' nostri tempi*; in 1751 Count Algarotti, one of the most brilliant wits of the period, recommended the study of his work to Frederick the Great of Prussia. For half a century more, architects and writers in this country gave him his due. John Gwynn, the architect, and author of that prophetic work *London and Westminster Improved*, wrote that 'it is entirely due to him that architecture has any existence amongst us'. And even during the early nineteenth century he was remembered; Sir John Soane called him 'that great luminary of Architecture'.

But in the seventeen-eighties and seventeen-nineties the belief in the validity of classical standards began to lose its hold. William Gilpin was educating Englishmen to see the 'picturesque' in nature and art, and Richard Payne Knight adored beauty 'without rule or symmetry'; Uvedale Price decried Palladian architecture as the architecture of plagiarism; the modest *Builder's Pocket-Book* with its academic know-how disappeared and was replaced by the voluble architectural literature of the approaching Regency; the interest in Burlington and his work was lost.

Towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century a distorted picture of Burlington's role as patron and architect was shaped; and it is difficult to reverse this even after many illuminating documents have been unearthed. The architect and virtuoso who, for the good of his cause, stood back and liberally handed on his theoretical convictions and his ideas to others was looked upon as an amateur who merely put his name to the works of servile professionals living on his bounty. But such immoral practice would have been unthinkable for the disciple of Shaftesbury. From the writings of Blomfield and Gotch to those of writers in the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties, and even in Professor Richardson's recent book on Georgian architecture, Burlington appears at best as a dabbling amateur.

Kent once wrote to his friend and patron: 'What you and I do it may be esteemed a hundred years hence'. He was wrong. Burlington's reputation and fame were eclipsed a hundred years after his death; it is only now, after no less than two hundred years, that we are again coming to appreciate his true measure—both as an architect and as a man.—*Third Programme*



'The Landing of Senesino': a print published about 1725, showing the Italian opera singer receiving a rapturous welcome from two other Italian singers and members of the musical public

Prospect of Britain—VII

Town Houses and Country Air

By CHRISTOPHER SALMON

AN observer can tell as much about society from its housing as he can tell about a person from his face and the way he walks. It is from these the stranger must take his first impression, and by them probably remember afterwards what he has come to know, the personality of the man, and the culture of the society. But looking at the housing of one's own country is self-revealing, a family album. There, in the old buildings, are pictures of one's cousins and aunts, and great-grandparents; and then, turning the page one sees, suddenly, in contemporary building, a photograph of one's social self. One struggles against it, one refuses to recognise it, one calls it a distortion. It reminds one of one's uncle or one's grandfather from whom, one hoped, one had grown away. And here comes a question. If some of our new building estates look, as I think they do, surprisingly like Victorian streets, have we misrepresented ourselves in them, or have we not moved as far away from Victorian values as we think?

Society's Character Revealed in Architecture

It does not seem to me that we can escape from believing that architecture does reveal society's character. As a body is the person's, so housing is society's point of contact with the physical world. Personality is what the person, and culture is what society, makes out of its physical needs. There are two ways in which we can treat these physical needs. We may write them off as so many limiting conditions and hindrances. Our physical will then become material problems which we must solve in material terms before anything spiritual is possible. But, alternatively, we may conceive our physical needs from the beginning as opportunities, and find means, from the beginning, to make their satisfaction spiritually expressive; as we have found means, for instance, to make out of lust, love; and, out of the need to eat, the domestic occasion and the art of cooking; and, out of the need for shelter, hearth and home; and, out of mutual dependence, the village green, and the town crescent and square.

For 400 years, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the builders and architects of English houses had succeeded in turning society's physical needs to excellent social account. The result, we say now, was one of the best traditions of domestic architecture in the world, but the contemporary cause must have been, all along, a particular quality of social life and social outlook. Society did not make its architectural statement with one voice; then, it was rather an anthology made by local communities, with here and there a careful individual statement by a practised hand. None the less, the statements were consistently social.

The Victorians were the first, before us, to write their architectural statements in one hand right across the country. They had a rapidly growing and rapidly moving population to house, and they did it by turning building, for the first time, into an industry. But they did something else, which turning building into an industry did not, it seems to me, make necessary at all, they turned housing and settlement into the business of providing people with merely material accommodation. I believe this was a crisis in our social history, for whoever treats housing as exclusively a material problem, instead of giving society a body to use, puts it into a strait-jacket. It seems to me that the Victorians did, with their streets and houses, put British society into a strait-jacket in the industrial towns, and in the suburbs, and along a great deal of our coast.

No British community ever endorsed the Victorian statements. They were hasty generalisations of contractors. But they had enormous effect. Perhaps society let them pass without comment, or at least without contradiction, because they seemed an inevitable industrial conclusion and in line with economic if not with social values. But it seems to me to be open to us to argue today, that if the Victorians thought industry a purely material instrument, that may have been because society had never taken industry over. Our housing problem is physically just as large, and certainly no less urgent than the Victorians', and we are working through a building industry, just as they did, to

solve it. But, unlike them, we are tackling it collectively and deliberately as a social problem. It was in order to reinstate certain social values that we undertook public housing as a social duty, so that we have an exciting chance of showing, on the largest scale, how we can through industry turn material needs to social advantage. When the Victorians brought manufacture to bear on the house, they converted it into so much merely measurable warmth and shelter. You could have it large or small, according to what you could pay, and you could have it plain or decorated, but the bricks and the mortar were never transformed into anything social or expressive. And the street became a kind of prisoners' walk because it was no more than the house indefinitely repeated.

Industrial building does not have to make in this way a physical prisoner of society. It does not follow that because you standardise the construction or even prefabricate the components of a house, the house, when you have built it, can be nothing more than a physical satisfaction of physical need. We know that our own architects and planners and engineers poured into their schemes for post-war British housing quantities of the most enlightened and positive social thinking. They made up their minds to build homes and communities, and not merely houses and towns. One has only got to go into any city architect or planners' office today—into Birmingham's, for instance—to find these same ideals on the wall, at any rate, and even on the table, too. What these ideas would look like, and what effect they would have, one can discover without waiting, by going into some of the new schools, into those, for example, in Hertfordshire. These buildings fill one with confidence in our social future. They state so clearly that education is not a matter of having to memorise facts and conditions in order that by taking them for granted one can learn to succeed in the world as it is, as a tram runs on rails. These schools are intended to be places where you learn from the start that the future will be what you make it.

Compared to the schools, most of the housing estates I have seen seemed to me bleak and disappointing. It is early to judge. Grass will grow, and trees, presently, and flowers are already about. The planners must have found it fearfully difficult to make shapes and forms out of row after row of the same little houses. How they must have longed to have leave to build churches and halls and blocks of building and shopping centres. And how the inmates wish that they had! In every house we build we are doing something important to society. Family life is the central bearing. There, if the bushing is good and the metal is up to it, the power runs smooth, and every derivative movement in society at the end of its shaft or belt or gear box turns smoothly too. But building is for sixty or a hundred years, and once set up the bearing is as costly to get at as the 'big-end' of a car.

Problem of Overcrowding

We began to grow socially conscious of housing as a problem at least as long ago as 1909. It was the first Town Planning Act of that year which encouraged the municipalities to make housing surveys. By 1914, Birmingham, for instance, had discovered that nearly one in three of all her inhabited dwellings was really unfit to be lived in. When a local authority calls a house unfit, you may be sure that it is. One in every three of Birmingham's houses had no W.C. of its own. One in every four had no separate water supply, no sinks, and no drains. Then there was overcrowding. In 1914, a third of our total population was living at the density of more than three people to two rooms. Two rooms did not mean two bedrooms. A living-room, for instance, if there was one, counted as one room. In 1919, we set to work on the strength of our information, and by 1939 we had cured about two-thirds of our overcrowding, though we still had some bad slums. Then for six years, during the war, we could do no building, and by the time the war was over we were 600,000 houses worse off than we had been before. A quarter of a million had been destroyed or damaged by bombing, and the rest, which must have been almost condemnable in 1939, had become so six years later.

What seems at first so baffling is that in spite of town building the need grows no less. We built 4,000,000 houses between the two wars, and already, since 1945, we have built 1,000,000, but last year five per cent. of the family population in England and Wales and thirty-one per cent. of the population of Scotland was still living in two or less rooms. Scotland is much worse off for houses than England and Wales. If England and Wales stopped building tomorrow and Scotland went on building at her present rate for thirty years, she would have then caught up to where England and Wales are now. In 1945 the City Architect and Planning Officer of Glasgow estimated the city's need at 42,000 new dwellings. Since then it has built 25,000, and without any population increase its need is 42,000 still.

Smaller Families and Earlier Marriages

The explanation has two parts: the size of families and the age at which people marry are both going down, so in a given number of population, more families than did now need separate homes. In 1911 an average group of 100 people were living as twenty-three families. In 1939, they were living as twenty-eight. In 1951, when the last figure was made, they were living as thirty-one. The second part of the explanation is that, as steadily as you build new houses, old ones tumble down. In 1952, Glasgow was 42,000 dwellings short of the total 345,000 it needed. During this year Glasgow hopes it will have built 4,000 dwellings. This is their highest annual figure yet, but if they could keep it up, by 1962 they would have as many houses as they estimated they needed last year. But if the average life of a house is 100 years (most local authorities are building at present for sixty) the normal replacement rate on Glasgow's total housing would be 3,450 a year. This means that if Glasgow had started, which she did not, in 1952, with all the houses she had needed, she would, by building at this unprecedented rate of 4,000 houses a year, be only just keeping her head above water.

Anyone to whom this makes the housing problem seem overwhelming, might remind himself of two things. First, as long as we have the problem we shall have a chance to profit by experience, and so, each year, to use our bricks and mortar for a social statement which expresses more nearly what it is we want to say. Second, instead of thinking each year that we still have not solved our problem, we might think instead, at our present rate, that we had solved 300,000 individual problems, by giving 300,000 families a home. To know what this means one should be entertained, as I was, by a family which had moved into its first home after eleven years. It was like being party to a honeymoon. Every stick of furniture, every cushion, every blanket, every rug, every picture, and every cup was new. In Glasgow it is common to wait ten years for a place of one's own.

As for the slums: I found a family of nine, living, cooking, washing—everything in one small room, about fourteen feet by ten. There was space for the one box bed, and for one small, horsehair sofa. There was a table in the room and one small chest of drawers, an old kitchen stove and a sink with cold water. The father and mother and four of the children slept in the bed, and the other three children slept on the sofa, where not one of them could stretch out. The family shared a lavatory on the stairs with thirty-two other people. The closet had no seat and the water did not run. In all the upstairs rooms in the tenement—and each room, you understand, was a home—the rain came through the ceiling and had to be collected in basins on the floors. In the ground-floor rooms the filth came up through the boards. The yard where the children could play was mud, and pools of water, and seepage from the drains. Rats were all over the house and gnawed through the boxes where the food was kept because there was nowhere better to keep it. Old ladies who live alone there have to tackle these rats by themselves. A most intrepid old lady told me a rat had taken a five-shilling pie off the sink the night before.

Houses Nobody Wants to Own

One would take these descriptions for 1870 instead of 1953, and it is difficult, when one sees families in this plight, to believe what is true, that they are there not because they are poor, or because the father is out of a job, but because there is nowhere else for them to go. There are miles of these tenement houses in Glasgow—in Townhead, in Calton, in Mile-End, Bridgeton, Gorbals, Dalmarnock, Garngad, Plantation, Lower Partick, on and on. And you could find the same conditions in Edinburgh, and the same in Leeds. Economically these streets of tenements have been virtually abandoned. You could buy one of them, over the heads of the tenants, for perhaps £100. Actually you could get plenty

of houses up and down the country given you for nothing, houses that nobody wants to own: nobody wants the responsibility. Landlords sometimes give them away to the tenants, so that they need no longer be even technically responsible for the roofs or the drains. The factor comes round one morning and tells you that from the end of the week you will not be needing to pay anything in rent, and then there is no one you can go to when the windows blow out, or a chimney pot falls through your ceiling. Or you pay rent to the factor and yet do not know who your landlord is; and by the time you, or the public health authority, find out, he has sold your dwelling and perhaps the street with it, and gone elsewhere.

There is some most disreputable trading in these streets. A man may buy one side of a street and sell it again within nine months before paying taxes. I saw a row of tenements that someone had bought for £100. It was reckoned that the rents, 10s. a week for a single room, came to £180 in the year. Meanwhile, perhaps one of this man's tenants would move on or die, as had just happened when I was there, and the landlord would put the single room up for sale, freehold, for £120, with the improvements made in it by the outgoing tenant. Such is the pressure for warmth and shelter that people will buy these terrible rooms. I saw one for which there had been 300 applications, and, most curious of all, 100 of these had come from people either doubled up, or unhappy, in the new housing estates. There I must leave it. Problems which I have not even mentioned multiply on every hand.

There is, for instance, the difficult question of land. If a town spreads it may be at the cost of farmland which is precious for the food it can grow. Between the wars England and Wales swallowed up farmland at the rate of 300 acres every day. And a policy of building on the outskirts may leave the heart of the city cold. Business buildings might be put up there when the old slum areas had at last been pulled down, but business buildings do not make a heart; one wants living people. Moreover, most of those who live in the middle of our cities would prefer to stay there or return there if they could be housed.

Then there is reconditioning, which the modification of rent restrictions may help. At present we are losing 100,000 houses a year from lack of repairs. Repairs could be carried out largely without taking men away from those at work on new buildings. And repairing uses less material than new building, and materials are scarce. The building industry itself is packed with interesting problems. There is also the crucial problem of rents. Though we use political machinery, we still properly call housing a social problem. That is what it is, and the values we must make up our minds about are social, too.—*Third Programme*

The Reconciliation

After our trial,
Accusation and denial,
Evidence on Oath
And cross-examination, both
Speaking at once, or with black silence seeking
To condemn, to justify, more than by speaking,—
After all this we find ourselves at large,
Have nothing to defend, prefer no charge.

And after our disease
Which made us sweat, stare, pant for breath,
And showed quite plainly the old age which is
Latent in faces, and the masks of Death—
For indeed we had the look of those too deeply
and dangerously ill to weep—
After all this, we are well again and see
The unhop'd-for daylight of recovery.

We find now what was proved by word
Of twisted mouth baseless, absurd,
And the clear and unforgivable offences
Of no more weight than any sickroom fancies.
We find our arms not made for threats and vaunts
And lips not just for labial consonants,
And the same faces over which were shed
Such alien lights are recognised instead,
Friends out of danger, darlings from the dead.

HAL SUMMERS

NEWS DIARY

December 16-21

Wednesday, December 16

After conferences at the Ministry of Labour an agreement is reached between the Transport Commission and the railway unions; National Union of Railwaymen calls off strike

Vote of censure on Government for its handling of affairs in Africa is defeated in Commons by twenty-eight votes. Opposition amendment to motion approving Government's television policy is defeated by twenty-two votes

North Atlantic Council publishes a *communiqué* after three-day meeting in Paris

Thursday, December 17

Commons debate foreign policy; Prime Minister makes statement about Bermuda Conference and negotiations in Egypt

Sir Ralph Stevenson, British Ambassador to Egypt, returns to Cairo after an absence of six months

H.M. the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh arrive in Fiji

No result is reached in French presidential election after first two ballots

Friday, December 18

Parliament adjourns for Christmas recess

A rise in railway freight charges is forecast in consequence of wage increases

H.M. the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh arrive in Tonga

Saturday, December 19

French Congress holds sixth ballot to elect a new President

Results of general election in Malta show that no party has secured a clear majority

Shah of Persia signs decree dissolving Parliament and ordering new elections

Sunday, December 20

Two further ballots fail to resolve deadlock over French presidential election

After prolonged drought snow falls in Swiss Alps

A strike of French airport ground staff interferes with flights between London and Paris

Monday, December 21

Western Powers end discussions in Paris about forthcoming conference on Germany in Berlin

New British Chargé d'Affaires arrives in Teheran

Members of British parliamentary delegation decide to postpone visit to Egypt

Professor J. D. Bernal is awarded Stalin 'peace prize'



Choirboys of St. Paul's Cathedral rehearsing carols last week round the illuminated Christmas tree which Her Majesty the Queen has presented to the cathedral. The choir has recently returned from a ten-week tour of America. Gifts are distributed every year on Christmas Eve from beneath the tree to various charities maintained by St. Paul's





A scene from 'The Coming of Christ', a nativity play by John Masefield, the Poet Laureate, which was performed last week in the Church of St. John the Baptist, Wittersham, Kent



Right: a concert, 'Music for Christmas', being given by the Board of Trade Choir in Westminster Hall on December 16



Above: bathers at Brighton last week; left: a visitor to Kew Gardens admiring a Glastonbury prunus in full bloom at the week-end



Party Political Broadcast

British Agriculture: the Government's Policy

By the Rt. Hon. SIR THOMAS DUGDALE, Bt., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HERE are just ten days to go till Christmas.* Most of you listening tonight are looking forward to family reunions, and children's parties, and other Christmas festivities. I certainly am. I believe that this year my wife, and your wife, can look forward to having a far easier time arranging our Christmas fare. There's more in the shops. And for the first time for fourteen years the sorely tried housewife really has a choice. She has a choice of food. Choice of presents and gifts, particularly for the children. Our children and grandchildren will have a better Christmas this year. And a happier Christmas for them is what most of us think of first. There are more toys about and they are cheaper and better made.

Now I get about the country quite a bit. A few days ago I was talking to a young housewife. She was, I think, typical of many, going about her day-to-day tasks without much fuss. She must have been still at school when the war began. She got her first ration book in 1940, and ration books have, in fact, been with her ever since. She told me she was jolly glad that in a few months' time she would have just about finished with her last one. She was looking forward to putting it on the fire next year. Now there was nothing very political about her. She knew, and you know, and we all know that in the past two years things have been getting better.

Of course, she realised that if you make comparisons with before the war things do cost more. Prices rose in war-time, and they rocketed up during the six years of socialist government. Indeed, food cost well above half as much again when the socialists left office as when they came in. But since the summer of last year—nearly eighteen months ago—prices have scarcely risen at all, and that's quite an achievement, that's what she liked. She told me she was now finding it a little easier to spin out the housekeeping money. She also said that providing the family meals was no longer a nightmare.

Now people do forget sometimes that two years ago tea was rationed. This Government has taken it off the ration. Two years ago sugar was rationed. This Government has taken sugar off the ration too. And now you can put that third lump into your cup of tea, even a fourth, without a guilty conscience. Two years ago at Christmas time—and not only at Christmas time—the sweet coupons ran out all too soon. Now I'm told we're the biggest sweet eaters in the world.

Soon we're all going to enjoy a Christmas dinner. Christmas puddings in the shops are down in price, and, if you make your own, eggs are off the ration; and there are plentiful supplies of suet, fruit, raisins, and nuts. And as for the main course, turkeys and fowls are plentiful this year. Lots of us, particularly in Yorkshire, like a piece of pork at this time of year. There's plenty of that, too.

Scarcity certainly does seem to be on the way out. Now how have we all managed to bring about this improvement?—because, remember, it's all of us who've done it together. Our food comes from two sources: from our own land here in Britain and from countries across the sea. We will always have to import some of the things we like to eat and there are many things

we can't grow here. It's no good thinking we can grow bananas or oranges, for example, though we do grow the best apples in the world. Food is easier these days because we've been getting more from both these sources. More from abroad, because we've been paying our way in the world again. More from our farms and market gardens, because the farmers and farm workers have been doing such a good job. The whole nation recognises it, and the whole nation is grateful to them.

There's more land under the plough. We're getting more food out of every acre. We're getting more milk out of each cow. And there are more calves and more sheep. And as for pigs, we now have more than we've ever had before in our history.

Today the farming industry is an expanding industry. You'd scarcely have thought it if you were listening to Mr. Tom Williams last week, as I was. To hear him you would have imagined that everything was fine until October 1951, and after that everything started to go downhill. Now in point of fact exactly the opposite has happened. Towards the end of the socialist term of office, the expansion in farm output showed every sign of coming to a standstill. I had to take immediate steps to get expansion under way again. What I did was to bring a number of important production grants back again: the ploughing-up grant, to bring land back into cultivation; the fertiliser subsidy, to help farmers get more out of the land; the calf subsidy, to encourage the rearing of young stock, which one day will provide more roast beef for us all. These were the most important grants, and there were a number of others as well. Now these grants are doing their job. If they hadn't succeeded, the shops wouldn't be as full as they are today. The proof of the policy is in the eating.

So much for production. Now I come to marketing—the different stages in the journey of the food from the farm to your larder. No one method of marketing suits all commodities. There are many different problems to be faced. Some products, like wheat, are harvested over a short period, and must be stored and released on to the market as they are needed. Other products are highly perishable and must reach your table quickly—milk and meat, for example. Others, like oats and barley for feeding stuffs, are produced on one farm and perhaps fatten the stock on another. These are some of the variations we've had to think about in working out our schemes for agricultural marketing.

These schemes rest on two basic principles. One: the farmer should have a square deal. The other: the housewife should have plenty of food to choose from in the shops. You see, the housewife and the farmer really depend on each other quite a lot: far more than most people realise. Listening to Mr. Tom Williams' broadcast I was a little worried that he never so much as mentioned the housewife. I was also surprised that when he quoted the Prime Minister all he quoted were the sentences about allowing the laws of supply and demand to be restored. He didn't bother to read you the next bit. This is what the Prime Minister went on to say: 'In the agricultural field another set of arguments must be borne in mind'. Indeed, Sir Winston gave this particular pledge to the farming com-

munity which I'd like to read to you. These are his words: 'It is necessary for the Exchequer to subsidise in one form or another, so as to bridge the gap between the price level reached in a free market on the one hand, and the price level necessary to sustain the welfare of the farmers on the other'. You couldn't want anything fairer than that. That's the broad principle on which we're working.

Of course the farmer, for his part, will want to do all he can to reduce his costs and increase his efficiency. In this way he will be doing his bit to keep down the amount of help which comes to him from the community as a whole.

Now how are the schemes going to work in practice? Producers themselves are often the best people to organise the marketing of farm products. They have first-hand experience both of production and of marketing. They find that a marketing board gives them confidence. They know it is in their interests to serve the housewife well. So producer marketing boards are the basis for many of our schemes—for example, potatoes and wool.

Next year the Milk Marketing Boards will be getting back into full swing again—giving a new impetus to the marketing of milk, helping to carry out the guarantee to the farmers, and, of course, the clean milk policy and Welfare Milk Scheme will be continued. These boards did a splendid job before the war. I know you'll be glad that they're coming back into the field again.

I'm afraid some of you may find all these details rather heavy going. But they are important. They're important to each one of you, whether you happen to be a farmer, whether you're in trade, or whether you're at the receiving end, as a housewife with her shopping basket or the family gathered round the dinner table.

I have spoken about milk; now I want to talk about our corn crops. For these, free market conditions will be restored. And after next harvest the farmer will be able to sell his grain to the merchants for the best price it will fetch, or, on the other hand, to keep as much of it as he pleases for animal feed. Grain merchants will be able to do their job again, while the farming industry will get a price guarantee in the form of a deficiency payment. This will give the farmer a real incentive to produce extra good quality. And the farmer who feeds his oats and barley to his stock, instead of selling them, will lose nothing by doing so.

Now what about meat? I must say I listened with amazement to Mr. Williams' solution for this problem. I don't know how it struck you, but it seemed to me that he was either in favour of keeping the Ministry of Food going for all time, or else in favour of nationalising the whole process of marketing and distributing meat. Of course, he called it a 'public commission'. Now what does he mean by a public commission? More and more jobs for the boys and less and less choice for the housewife? I think that's how his idea would work out in practice.

Well, we think we've got a better plan than that. We'll see that the housewife gets the joint of meat she prefers. Rationing will end next year. We're going to see that the farmers know, well in advance, the minimum price they'll get for the animal which provides this meat. And

opinion on recent conversations with people in Rumania, I could refute his statements by quoting from letters from Rumania equally recent, but think it preferable to refer to the official Statistical Report as published in the Rumanian press on July 19, which speaks for itself: 'The supply of some basic foodstuffs to urban populations', it states, 'has not been satisfactory, because of the delay in vegetable production . . . and the plan for collection and purchase of agricultural products not being fulfilled. The planned *distribution* (my italics) of meat, fats, and sugar has not been carried out'.

As to the living conditions in the second half of the year, the situation is not as simple as Mr. Winnard would have us believe. Just as it is an understatement to speak of an 'improvement' during the period from July 5 (when the Government gave the order to release the goods accumulated through the non-fulfilment of the 'distribution plan') up to the end of August (when Bucharest was full of foreign visitors)—this was a period of plenty—it is an overstatement to speak of a 'steady improvement since August', in support of which Mr. Winnard quotes a second price reduction, which I am obliged to point out has unfortunately not yet been made. However, in spite of the one price reduction which was made since the August Festival, we obtain curious tables: *e.g.*, for white bread, comparing the prices at different periods:

Up to July	5.35 lei a kilogramme
During July-August	3.00 lei a kilogramme
September onwards	4.80 lei a kilogramme

so the 'price reduction' was in fact a price increase as compared with the Festival prices which impressed the foreign visitors.

As to the 'correct estimate of conditions', it cannot be obtained by comparing *certain* wage rates with prices. For instance, the salaries and bonuses of stakhanovites and shock workers are as irrelevant as those of a Russian manager of a SOVROM (Soviet-Rumanian) company who earns 13,000 lei a month—or his Rumanian deputy's who earns only 6,500 lei a month—because of the small percentage they represent. What is important for such a comparison is not the salary of the 7,500 stakhanovites—as I have already pointed out in my previous letter—nor of the 65,000 shock workers, but the average wages of the remaining 2,427,500 wage earners. For these, up to November, the average was about 400 lei a month, according to official Rumanian communist data. Yet at pay day, the average worker does not even receive his 400 lei, as some fifteen per cent. of this is automatically deducted, representing income and other taxes, obligatory subscriptions to the party and trades-union papers, to the trades-unions, the Rumanian-Soviet Friendship Society, cinema, workers' fund, official presents, and special contributions, such as this year's to pay for the stay of the foreign delegates to the Festival, etc. The net salary of the average wage earner was thus, up to now, only 340 lei a month, or 1.50 an hour.

At this rate, one hour's work is necessary to pay for one kilo of plums (to take Mr. Winnard's examples), more than three hours for one kg. of sugar, more than two hours for one kg. of flour 'and so on'.

Unfortunately there is no space here to discuss all the points in Mr. Winnard's letter. 'The completely free health services' alone would need more space than I devote to my whole letter. Nevertheless, I should like to point out that the Rumanian 'Party and Government' have recently ordered a price-cut of medicines and X-rays and that the Rumanian press boasts that as 'another proof of the care for the working people'. Who are these 'working people' who pay for medicines and X-rays under a 'completely free health service'?

Yours, etc.,

London, S.W.5

DANIEL NORMAN

Bruckner's Symphonic Style

Sir,—It would be a pity to become too involved in the almost incredible tangle of Robert Simpson's article on Bruckner, in THE LISTENER of December 17, but I really must take up a few points that emerge from his welter of contradictory metaphor.

It is right and proper that Bruckner should be defended from ignorant criticism and prejudice, but exaggerated claims will not help him, particularly if they employ the hoary fallacy of admitting his faults in an extremely dubious attempt to prove that they are virtues. Moreover, it is not only to Bruckner that a disservice is done by this kind of special pleading, but also to the art of music in general.

Whatever one may think of Wagner's dictum (and the present writer, to whom Wagner's polemics do not as a rule appeal, believes it to be valid), the upshot of Robert Simpson's first paragraph appears to be that since music is specifically illogical, the habit of getting bogged down at critical junctures is preferable to that craftsmanship which conceives a work as a smooth and structural whole, and that Bruckner, who frequently gives evidence of a tongue-tied thinking from point to point, is therefore preferable to those composers (for instance, Mozart and Sibelius) who, as Tovey has said, 'never get into a hole'.

His next point is to advise us to have nothing to do with 'the athletic and dramatic continuity of sonata style' if we would appreciate those works of Bruckner that were, according to Bruckner, conceived and written in just that style. If we did not know better, this would give the game away indeed. One wonders, why did he call them symphonies? Is this another of the tricks of his friends? Did they alter the title pages from 'Organ Voluntaries' on the way to the press? Apropos of organ voluntaries, surely the remarks on Bruckner's orchestration, and apologetics for his many pauses, implying as they do that the symphonies are most suitable for performance in a cathedral, are both unjust to Bruckner and a naive and shameless defence of organ-loft orchestration. Franck is infinitely worse in this respect than Bruckner; is he then a much greater composer?

The next paragraph deals with sonata form tonality, in a way that seems to isolate Bruckner as being in some way different from other composers in his treatment of this aspect of form. Passing this by, surely the slow emergence of one key from another is one of the greatest of Bruckner's many debts to Wagner, apart from the fact that it has innumerable historical precedents reaching back to the beginnings of classical tonality?

Lastly, although I deeply appreciate Bruckner's music, what really great composer would tamely allow his friends to present one after another of his mature and major works in indescribably mauled versions? It is the mark of a composer of the front rank that at least most of the time he knows exactly what he wants, and writes with a finality that brooks no alteration. The fact that Bruckner 'spent years polishing his work' may mean that he was a 'master of mere technicalities' (which he was) but it may also have quite another meaning.

Yours, etc.,
Whitstable PETER J. PIRIE

The Revolt of the American Authors

Sir,—I am surprised to find THE LISTENER (November 26) dispensing such old-fashioned information as that contained in Mary McCarthy's 'The Revolt of the American Authors'. It is true that some American intellectuals are currently employed in the business of culture—in lecture-tours, personal appearances, writing-schools, and other devices by which cultural

snobs assuage their cultural itch. But this has been true for a long time. The really new business in America is that of cataloguing and classifying cultural snobs from the point of view of a snob-collector, a supersnob. It is really quite simple. One merely assumes an attitude of absolute superiority to all cultural manifestations. One describes the behaviour of groups as if one had, oneself, nothing whatever to do with them. One is of another species entirely. By taking this lofty ground, one can imply that there is something faintly discreditable about the way everyone else makes his living without ever hinting that one is engaged in making a living oneself. This, sir, is the latest gambit in that relentless search for cheap advantage which, as you are doubtless aware, is a constant preoccupation of vulgar minds everywhere.—Yours, etc.,

New York ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS

Liability of Hospitals for Negligence

Sir,—I would refer to the talk given in the Third Programme last week by Mr. C. J. Hamson, reprinted in the THE LISTENER of December 10, in which it is stated that the case of 'Jones v. Manchester Corporation and others' is now on appeal to the House of Lords'. As solicitor for the Manchester Regional Hospital Board, who took the appeal from the Court of First Instance to the Court of Appeal, I think I should correct this statement and say that no notice of appeal has been given by any of the parties in this case and the time for appealing to the House of Lords has long since passed. Apart from this minor and entirely factual error, may I respectfully congratulate Mr. Hamson on his most interesting talk?—Yours, etc.,

Manchester, 8 P. W. H. REVINGTON
Legal Adviser,
Manchester Regional Hospital Board

'Follies and Grottoes'

Sir,—Neither your reviewer (THE LISTENER, December 10) nor Miss Jones herself appear to have grasped the true significance of follies and grottoes. The craze for them coincided with a Georgian suppression of primitive emotions where official art and literature were concerned. Emotions denied their normal artistic outlet crystallised round these minor architectural experiments in a manner far too widespread and consistent to be dismissed as eccentric. Reference to Freud's chapters on dream-imagery is of great help in understanding the process, which was to culminate in the poetry of the Romantic Movement.

Although one may have reservations about the 'morning charm' of Pain's Hill, with its Salvator Rosa themes, and about the date of the red sandstone remnant at Halesowen, Miss Jones has earned the gratitude of workers on this subject. What a pity she has denied herself a closer examination of the historical process involved.

Yours, etc.,
Seaford LAURENCE KITCHIN

The Inventor of the Hansom Cab

Sir,—I agree with Mr. Ian M. Leslie that it was no fault of the early publishers of *The Builder* that Hansom did not receive more for his idea of printing such a journal.

I was mainly concerned in my short talk with showing how 'un-Midas-like' was Hansom's touch during his thirties! It was ill-luck and, as the military would have it, failure to appreciate the situation that caused his schemes to fall down; my words at that point being simply an attempt to reflect his own undoubtedly appointment at the series of failures.—Yours, etc.,
Milnrow NORMAN TURNER

Is the Soviet Attitude to Music Changing?

By ALEXANDER WERTH

WHERE music is concerned—though this also applies to other fields—there is good news to report from Russia today. If literature, art, the theatre, and the cinema in Russia were having for many years past more and more severe restrictions put upon them by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, music was the one art that was still fairly free until the disastrous Zhdanov decree of February 1948.

Victims of Zhdanov

This decree, as well as Zhdanov's own utterances at the famous conference a month earlier at which he tried to put the fear of death into composers who were not being sufficiently simple, tuneful, and popular, and whom he charged with 'formalist' and 'western' deviations, was a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* of the doctrine of socialist realism. Not only that, but a kind of bureaucratic control of the most obnoxious and most withering kind was set up, with Zhdanov's, and, indeed, Stalin's full approval over the creative work of composers. Any work that did not meet with the approval of the Steering Committee of the Composers' Union (a committee composed of Zhdanov's die-hards) was damned from the outset, and had no chance of being either published or performed. This extraordinary system has now been denounced in no uncertain terms by one of the major victims of the Zhdanov system, Aram Khachaturian, whose violin concerto and many other works are widely known throughout the world.

But how sinister the system was one could already guess from what happened only a few months after the Zhdanov decree. It was when Prokofiev had his new opera, 'The Story of a Real Man', rejected by the pundits of the Composers' Union as 'formalist' and, in short, 'unsuitable'. I have not heard Prokofiev's opera. Nobody was allowed to hear it; one had to take the bureaucrats' word for it that it was bad. But from the beginning I found this very hard to believe, all the more so as, in this opera, Prokofiev had gone out of his way to write in as simple, as 'accessible', and as tuneful a manner as he could; and who could doubt for a moment that, having said he would do that, he would write something about as beautiful as the Russian choruses in 'Alexander Nevsky', or the glorious main theme of his 1939 'Ode to Stalin', or other relatively 'popular' works (as distinct from his more sophisticated piano sonatas, for instance) all belonging to Prokofiev's Soviet period—a period in which, as he himself admitted, 'he got nearer to the people than ever before'.

The libretto of the opera lent itself to the use of Russian 'folk-song' material; it dealt with Russia in war time and the heroic life of a Russian fighter-pilot. But Prokofiev, unlike the Zhdanovites, had a somewhat unorthodox idea of how to compose 'popular' and 'folk-song' music: his was not the simple, purely imitative way. Soon after the Zhdanov decree he had the courage—and it took some courage in those days to hit back, however diplomatically—to write to the Composers' Union:

I never had the slightest doubt that melody was by far the most important element in music. Yet nothing is more difficult to discover than a melody which would be immediately understandable even to the uninitiated listener and, at the same time, be original. Here the composer is beset by numerous dangers: he is apt to become trivial and vulgar, or else to dish out a repetition of something already heard before. One must be particularly careful to make a melody simple, but without allowing it to become cheap, sickly, or imitative rubbish.

Dishing out repetitions of what had been heard before was precisely what, since the Zhdanov decree, the bureaucrats of the Composers' Union were expecting composers to produce—and this is fully confirmed by the ferocious attack made on them last month by Khachaturian. But to return for a moment to Prokofiev. He cannot have died a happy man, though no doubt he knew that sooner or later sanity would prevail. He knew that it was a far greater achievement to write a melody like the main theme of his 'Ode to Stalin' than to fill up a symphony with bits and pieces of familiar folk tunes. I daresay the melody he wrote on that occasion had only a superficial connection

with the person of Stalin; it was just a good theme which he adapted to the occasion, not perhaps without his tongue in his cheek, for he had an ironical twist of mind, and hated all that was 'ham' and official. That he had his tongue in his cheek I rather suspect from the fact that, in the middle part of the Ode, he makes the peasant chorus sing the praises of Stalin in the form of a C-major scale—up and down and up and down. This is indeed different from the main theme, which is certainly not imitative; it is, while being very Russian, also characteristically Prokofievite.

I saw a good deal of Prokofiev during the war and just after; and he was then certainly one of the happiest men. It is not true to say that he felt an exile in Russia, and was hankering for the artistic freedom of the west. He had had about fifteen years of it, and he felt that he was doing better work since he had got back to Russia. He looked, as was remarked by every American who saw him, singularly like Senator Taft, and he had a rather superior and ironical manner which used to infuriate certain Soviet bureaucrats, but, in spite of all this, he was still emotionally very deeply attached to Russia, and enjoyed nothing better than writing music which, without being imitative, could still rank as unmistakably Russian in character.

His attitude to the Soviet system was a rather complex one; his whole upbringing was pre-Soviet, and there were many things in the Soviet Union he found exasperating. Yet I still think he was convinced that artistically, Russia had greater possibilities than the west, which, he thought, had come to a bit of a dead end; and the immense audiences in Russia, and the Russian attempt to bring not only an artistic élite, but the multitudes of the people, into the artistic life of the nation, certainly appealed to him. That was the impression I gained from him during a number of conversations towards the end of the war; and Prokofiev was not a man who went out of his way to say the 'right thing'; in fact, he spoke with the utmost disdain of the smaller musical fry in Russia, who were making of 'popular art' and 'socialist realism' in its cheapest and nastiest forms, a profitable racket.

Against the triumph of these particular forms of socialist realism under the Zhdanov decree, Prokofiev was about the only one who openly protested. The last few years of his life must have been rather unhappy. Nothing as bad as the deliberate sabotage of his opera at the end of 1948 seems to have happened again; but he was obviously discouraged, and though he tried to adapt himself to the new rules, while still remaining his own unmistakable self, it must have been an agonising process; and the belated praises sung by the Soviet press over his Seventh Symphony, when he was already a dying man, can have been only cold comfort to him. Indeed, for a long time after he died, nothing was said about him in the Soviet press; then there appeared some obituary notices, marked by a kind of grudging praise, and full of reservations. But now some months have passed since Prokofiev's death, and during these months some extraordinary things have happened in the Soviet musical world. This month, a plenary session of the Composers' Union is to be held, and we may see the rejection of the crippling directives which did their best to ruin Soviet music during the last few years.

A Crushing Indictment

This is not guesswork on my part. The article published last month by Khachaturian in the official organ of the Composers' Union, *Sovetskaya Muzyka*, is a crushing indictment of the Zhdanov policy as lamentable failure. No doubt Khachaturian proclaims that socialist realism continues to be the correct doctrine, but he contends that it was pushed far beyond any reasonable limits, and that the result was the strangling of all true talent. 'During the last few years', Khachaturian writes, 'composers have not been producing at all the things wanted by the people'—which means, in effect, that the Zhdanov experiment has proved a complete failure. Then he talks about the way in which composers had felt obliged to 'adapt' themselves to the Zhdanov decree:

As a result of this adaptability, raised almost to the level of a creative

principle, our composers started dishing out insipid conventional stuff, lacking in all creative individuality... all this presumably on the ground that it was safer to produce stuff which people felt they had already heard before. So-called 'monumental' works were produced for choirs and grand orchestras, and with nothing in them! But one had to put up with it just because the title had something about 'Love for the Soviet Homeland' or 'Struggle for Peace' or 'Friendship among the Nations'. But in the end life itself gave a proper estimate of these works: they were forgotten overnight.

How Prokofiev would have chuckled if he had read this article! And, indeed, without further ado, Khachaturian proclaims that Shostakovich and Prokofiev were undoubtedly the two greatest Soviet composers. 'Prokofiev must be included', he writes, 'among the very greatest of Soviet composers, and one of whom the Soviet people have every right to be proud'. This is different from the attacks on Prokofiev in 1948 and from the half-hearted obituaries published some time after his death.

And, getting down to the fundamentals of socialist realism, Khachaturian goes on:

There can be no artistic progress in works devoid of lively and inquiring thought... Socialist realism cannot tolerate a flattening of standards, under which one composition is almost indistinguishable from the other... Revolutionary romanticism is an essential part of our art, and no good art is produced by people constantly afraid of 'saying the wrong thing'.

That is precisely the state of affairs that the Zhdanov regime did its best to introduce. And Khachaturian then dwells on the incredible conditions in which creative composers have had to work in Russia in the last few years. It does not make a nice story:

Under the present administrative 'guardianship' system the composer is in fact relieved of all responsibility. If he takes a new song or other composition along to this or that administrative body, everybody there considers it his duty to give him what is called 'advice': which means he gets instructions to rewrite the work. And the odd thing is that some composers readily agree to all these changes, even if it means throwing away parts of the work which may be the fruit of some hard thinking and some deeply felt inspiration, and to dress it up to make it look like a hairdresser's dummy.

In another part of the article, Khachaturian says that Soviet music, with its Zhdanovite cult of folk song, has become like a second-hand clothes shop—'from the people and back to the people', and he continues:

No more of your guardianship: Let every composer do his work on his own responsibility, without all this petty supervision of the work of composers, orchestras, and theatres. Criticism—by all means. But let us have no more administrative directives from our bureaucrats with their constant worry about being on the safe side. A folk tune is not enough to make a work a national work. There are no folk songs in Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, yet it is a more national work than recent compositions with their anthology of folk tunes which leave one completely indifferent. The problem of national style in music must be treated broadly, without artificial limitations and hair-splitting legislation... We talk incessantly about socialist realism, but we never discuss style, just as if style were something static incapable of progress. We must get out of the rut and must look for new forms of expression.

This is the boldest defence of the artist's individuality (within reasonable limits of socialist realism) that anyone has dared to make in the Soviet Union for years. It is certainly indicative of a big change.

—*Third Programme*

On Not-Catching Moles

By DAVID PIPER

RECENTLY, various public figures have meditated upon different aspects of not-doing. Mr. E. M. Forster has written upon the excellence of Not-Listening to Music and of Not-Looking at Pictures, and the distinguished Slade Professor of Fine Arts at Cambridge has given a definitive broadcast on Not-Teaching Art History. One could analyse this curious literary form in terms, say, of the Age of Anxiety, or of typical British understatement, for a characteristic of all these forms of not-doing is that they are all very active. But specimens are not yet really numerous enough to make such an analysis profitable, and all I want to do is to outline a further branch of the science of not-doing, perhaps less snob, suburban even, but of great possibilities.

Not-Catching Moles, you may object, is very small beer. Why not Not-Gardening itself, of which Not-Catching Moles is but a very minor faculty? Simply that Not-Gardening is far too big a beer, an immense subject, that demands at least a professor with a Chair. I can only make one comment on it now, which is relevant to my own sub-division. Namely: you cannot not-garden without a garden. Similarly, you cannot not-catch moles without a garden or without moles. If you haven't got moles, you've had it.

I have moles. It sounds a simple statement, and those who live in the sterile centres of cities will not be impressed. Nor will real gardeners, for they never have moles. At the first out-crop of earth on their immaculate lawns, real gardeners move at once into action; they mobilise like an armoured division, with spades, spikes, and steel traps. If these fail, the gas troops are called in, the local vermin officer arrives, with cylinders, and that is that. This cold, inhuman approach is not for the non-gardener, who is innocent and pure of heart.

I remember very clearly my own first reactions to the mole. It was a fine spring morning; there had been a heavy dew, the grass looked frosted like an iced cake, and, in the middle, as though a chocolate, rich and crumbly, of the most luscious brown, the molehill. I knew it at once for what it was. I called my wife.

'Look!' I said, 'we've got a mole'.

We were both very excited and proud; it was almost like one's first car, or a baby. Of course, we could not help telling everybody about it. And next morning, I went to look again. It was there—only a lot

bigger. We both agreed that it was bigger. The third morning it was enormous, and, as we came out to greet it, we saw its apex move—waver and topple over. We were delighted; we went close to it, very softly, and waited for the mole to come out. The fresh peak heaved and crumbled and fell. But the mole did not come out. Then the movement stopped. We were very disappointed. But at the end of the week, it was really a very fine molehill indeed, rising from the lawn like a new Vesuvius.

The difficulty was that at the end of the week, in summer, I always make my token gesture to the garden. I mow the lawn. Obviously I could not mow the molehill. After anxious conference, we decided that it must go. So I moved it; it took several journeys with a spade, but I was careful not to injure the mole hole or stop it, leaving the mole much more fresh air than it had had before.

Next morning there were three brand-new molehills. Suddenly, with a terrible intuitive flash of vision, I saw the future littered with molehills; there was something ruthless and sinister about those three silent mounds, something invulnerable. I walked round the garden, thinking what to do. There seemed nothing one could do. In the end, I lit a cigarette, opened up one of the holes, lay down and blew smoke down it. I spoiled a cigarette and I ate some mud.

Next morning, there were seven molehills.

Then I really knew that I had moles. Of course, I went on living. One does. Almost daily, I moved the molehills. It is incredible how much earth moles throw up in a night, and how heavy it is. I realised why real gardeners have wheelbarrows, though I did not fall so far as to get one. I seemed to spend all my time moving earth by spade. I started asking advice.

Traps, they said, are the answer, and someone actually lent me some traps. But I discovered very quickly that traps are for professionals. I bandaged myself, returned the traps, and sought more advice. Some said: watch the earth and when you see it move, *strike* with your spade. Hawk-eyed, I watched the earth, but the earth that I watched never stirred. Others said: ring up the Vermin Officer. Humbly I rang the Vermin Officer and, indeed, he came very promptly. He looked at my molehills and said he could gas them—but they would only come back: moles always come back to a good, wormy soil. He said

he preferred dealing with rats. I said I had moles. He said it would cost me something. The cost in fact sounded heavy, but I was getting bored with moving endless earth, so I sank my principles. He went away, saying he would be back with his gas. After five months, when he still had not come back, I got discouraged and asked more advice. Poison, they said ('take a worm, and inject it with strychnine'), but this was vetoed because of children around. Carbide, said someone else. I got carbide, but was warned in time by a neighbour who had primed his moleholes with it and the explosion had been so violent that his herbaceous border had flown into the air, raining lupins and delphiniums. By this time, my lawn was composed of dark brown patches ringed scantily with wispy grass, and I had moved tons of earth. I found myself menaced by two dangers: either I should have to become a real gardener, or else I would soon be pathologically mole-ridden. So I went abroad for a spell on my doctor's advice.

Now you may have noticed that so far I had never actually *met* a mole. I had no idea what a mole looked like, though they burrowed in my sick imagination with a primeval, volcanic urge, impending earthquake and rocking sanity like a frail paper house. I had to go to France to meet a mole personally. Of course, I knew they were brown and furry; the men with traps spoke cosily of moleskin waistcoats. I knew they were proverbially blind. Still, I was not prepared for my mole when, at last, he came.

We were sitting on the beach at Varengeville, south of Dieppe. The cliffs rose straight and sheer behind us; the beach was empty and the sea was beautiful; we were very happy and relaxed and the moles were miles and miles and an ocean away. Into this sunlit, sweet tranquillity, the mole dropped from heaven: plop. There it was, squirming in the pebbly sand. It was about four inches long, with webbed front paws (or perhaps not webbed—they seem webbed now), paws thrusting blindly forward and out, a pointed snout and apparently no eyes, it was covered with a charming, well-brushed brown fur; there was no doubt about it.

So I said to my wife, quite casually: 'That's a mole'. She agreed. The mole scrabbled.

After a time, I asked my wife why she had not warned me when I finally went mad; I argued that one should be shut up well before moles started falling from a cloudless sky. She defended herself, but then it occurred to me that, if she saw the mole, she also was mad. I put this to her. She agreed. Then she said we had better take a grip on ourselves.

We took a grip, and after we had wrestled mentally a while, it suddenly became quite clear, really, obvious: the mole had been drilling away through the field above, and then, suddenly, instead of the solid earth—the cliff face, the void, nothing but empty air . . . falling, falling. We shuddered; it was dreadful to think of.

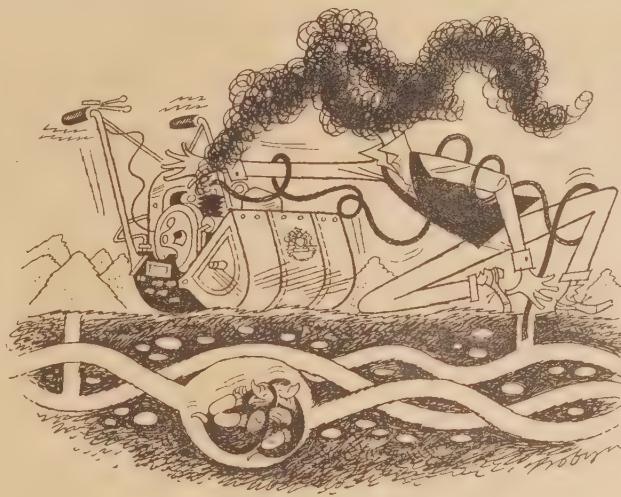
We looked round for the mole, to console it. But it had vanished. After a long hunt, we found it four yards away, pretending to be a bit of seaweed. My wife looked at me, and said that, if we left it there, it would be drowned. We could not possibly leave it there, but it was still a long time to lunch; we would just have to watch it, and then take it up with us. We tried to encourage it; we cleared a path for it with bits of stick. We spoke to it, cheerfully, as friends. But it was not responsive; it remained aloof, and seemed anxious to have nothing to do with us. My wife pointed out that it was a French mole, and should therefore be addressed in French. But what, she said, is the French for mole? *Moule*, I said. She looked at me suspiciously, and said that that was nonsense: it was something like *chauve souris*. I laughed: anyone knew that meant bald-mice, equals bats. *Poilu-souris*, said my wife, equals furry-mice, equals moles. We had a long argument about what its French name was, until we decided that whatever it was, it was time for lunch and time we restored the poor little thing to its native fields. We looked around, but this time it had vanished properly, and we could not find it. We hunted for ages, but it had

dug itself in somewhere, and there was nothing to do but leave it to the cruel sea. It weighed very much on us, and we both had bad dreams later, but there was nothing we could do.

When we got home to England, we still felt guilty about the mole, but one look at the garden dispelled that. It was like one of those lunar photographs, a desolation of peaks and craters. And at last a neighbour produced a brilliant idea: infallible; one took a motor mowing machine, and a length of hose. I got the mowing machine and spent the rest of the day looking for a bit of hose. Next day, having found the hose, I started the machine, but the hose was not big enough; the nozzle of the machine's exhaust, on to which I had to fit it, was a curious flat shape, obviously not designed for hoses. I spent that day working on an ingenious fitment, an adaptor. Next day I fitted the fitment on the exhaust, and then the hose on the fitment. The hose split. So I took off the fitment, and held the split end of the hose over the exhaust, and pushed the other end down a molehole. It was very fine: little puffs of blue smoke spurted up all over the garden, and I dwelled in a god-like nimbus of blue smoke from where the split end did not fit properly. I opened up the throttle and really let 'em have it. After half an hour I felt strange and had to go and lie down. The doctor said it was monoxide poisoning.

After a few days, when I got up again, there were eleven entirely new molehills. That is how things stand now. But for those who are really interested in Not-Catching Moles, I have one basic tip. Get an ordinary twig besom (only 3s. 6d.) and just brush the molehills away to where real gardeners have their flowers. It is much easier than spade-work. And there is hope. I have treasured two observations. First, that if you brush the earth away, the mole gets discouraged after a while about that particular hole, and starts a new one near-by, while the ground about the old molehole subsides.

Secondly, that in about twenty years the moles get bored with any given plot of ground, and move on. If therefore you brush diligently and regularly, the moles are kept on the move, ensuring a more or less regular subsistence of the earth. In twenty years' time, when my moles finally move on to my neighbour's garden, I shall have the finest and deepest sunk lawn in the country.—*Home Service*



Professor Frank Debenham's *Kalahari Sand* (Bell, 15s.) describes the experiences of an official expedition sent to investigate the water resources of the great thirstland constituting the western half of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. It is a pleasant and entertaining narrative, delightfully illustrated by many photographs and sketches; and although it can hardly be regarded as a great or even exciting travel book, it does succeed in conveying a vivid impression of a region which lions, poisonous snakes, heavy sand, and lack of surface water, have kept very sparsely inhabited by human beings. Professor Debenham is cautiously optimistic about the possibility of converting it into good ranching country once the underground supplies of water have been fully exploited. But he is concerned primarily with what his party saw and did, and while his account of the desert and its many forms of animal and plant life contains some valuable information, the rest of his narrative is interesting mainly as showing how easy and unadventurous travel is nowadays to an expedition well equipped and in constant touch with the outside world by radio.

* * *

Mr. H. S. Mackintosh, whose broadcast tribute to Hilaire Belloc appeared in our columns recently, is known to many as a ballade-writer, and it is a pleasure to welcome a collection of his works in this *genre* published under the title *Ballades and Other Verse* (Hart-Davis, price 10s. 6d.). The author, one fancies, would be the last to claim that all these ballades are masterpieces (though in regard to some of them the reviewer finds himself musing over that description and murmuring, perhaps, with Mr. Mackintosh, 'I almost used a word I never use'). However this may be, readers are sure to find here something to suit their mood and to amuse and please them, enlivened and graced as many of the verses are with zest, ingenuity, and wit.

Short Story

The Gentle Shade

By ARTHUR CALDER-MARSHALL

THE Willows, Tremarthen Road, was cheap and charming; but despite the housing shortage it hung in the market many years before Herbert Fullalove snapped it up. Parsimonious and rationalist, Herbert considered that the Willows was a form of bonus earned by his faith. I use the word 'faith' designedly, because he was not like so many of us a man who didn't believe in ghosts. He was prepared to stake his life that ghosts did not exist.

His wife Elsie agreed with him out of a conviction that disagreement about trivialities has wrecked more marriages than adultery. But Herbert told her nothing of the ghost, because after all what is the point of saying anything about nothing?

They had two children, a boy of seven called Frank and Elizabeth a girl of five. These children had on occasion made their parents sigh in the days when the Fullaloves were living in three rooms on the top floor of a high house in London. Their energies were too bounded by cramped living space and their imaginations working upon chairs, cushions, and tables produced what their reasonable father called chaos, though to them it represented various forms of enchantment.

The Willows with its large and desolate garden was a paradise to the children. There was a plenitude of outhouses, sheds, pigsties, ramshackle and tumbledown, overgrown with weeds and littered with fascinating articles, whips, horsecollars, carriage-lamps, and the like, abandoned by owners unknown. The problem for Elsie now was not how to contain their energies in a small space but how to get them to meals and bed in time. 'It isn't as though they were naughty', she said to her husband, 'but they are so engrossed in this new life of their own that I might not exist for all the notice they take of me. They don't seem to hear my voice when I speak. It sounds absurd, but they don't seem all here'.

'It is absurd', answered her husband. 'What you are complaining of is that for once the two children are really happy'.

The teachers at the children's new school were not so happy. Frank had been a year ahead of his age in his London school and Elizabeth could read and write before she was five. But at Saint Erkenwold's, Blisshaven, they neither shone.

The cadaverous principal, Miss Puttick, laid her perplexity before their mother. 'The only other case in my experience at St. Erkenwold's was little Lamorna. Just the same intelligence and the same indifference to learning'.

'Who is Lamorna? The children so often talk of her. Could she come to tea?'

'You don't know?' asked Miss Puttick. 'But surely'

'You forget that we are strangers here'.

'I just thought, being at the Willows Miss Puttick, who found it hard to end a sentence, was, in her own apologetic jargon, liable to lapse into aposiopeses. 'She was the loveliest of children . . . not of this world, I thought at once and so it proved'.

Mrs. Fullalove had never lived in a seaside village before, so that she had no standards of comparison. Miss Puttick shut up, pulled down the blinds, locked and bolted the door of her personality in much the same way as the butcher, the baker, and all the other tradespeople had done to Mrs. Fullalove. It was the result no doubt of living in a narrow community or of too much ozone.

When she went back to the Willows, she made tea and rang the gong for the children. She called at first in a gentle voice and then with mounting anger. But there was no answer. She suddenly felt a nostalgia for that crowded London flat where Frank and Elizabeth were under her feet most of the time. In this great, deserted garden she was losing them, in the way that every mother must lose the children of her womb. Or was it in some utterly different way?

She went out to look for them, treading softly, not calling at all. There came into her mind the unpleasant word 'spy' but she put it away because it ignored her maternal responsibility. But she did not call, she was careful to make no noise.

Above the stables was a hayloft. From where she stood on the corrugated blue tiles she heard her children's voices distantly above. They were speaking quietly and seriously as though making an arrange-

ment for some meeting, but what they said was indistinct. Only one word was clearly audible, the word she had been half-expecting and wholly dreading to hear, 'Lamorna'.

Could it be that her imagination had prompted it? She strode silently to the ladder leading to the loft and as she set her foot on the first rung, she heard the name again, spoken in Frank's voice, softly teasing. She went up quietly until just her head projected above the floor. Frank and Elizabeth both had their backs turned to her. 'What?' Frank was saying; and then suddenly both of her children turned round, red in the face and rather frightened. 'Oh, it's you mother', Frank said, 'you gave me a fright'.

'Who is Lamorna?' she asked, more sharply than she intended.

'Can you see any Lamorna?' Frank asked in reply.

Mrs. Fullalove looked at the cobwebs in the rafters, a chink of blue sky through the roof, the old dry rats' dirts on the floor.

'Lamorna is a girl we made up to play with', Elizabeth said. 'She's the nicest girl who ever was'.

'Your tea is ready', Mrs. Fullalove answered and as she waited for them to go down the ladder, she added: 'I don't approve of all this make-believe. It isn't healthy'. Calling it 'make-believe' reassured her until she realised that the children's attitude, kneeling on the ground with their backs to her, was explicable only if they had been facing a third person, a person who had seen her and warned them of her presence.

That evening, after they were in bed and before Herbert had returned from the dark office in the city where he earned so little arguing that man had no light but the candle of his reason, Mrs. Fullalove went out and padlocked the stable door. As she did so, her sleeve was tugged: a small succession of tugs such as a child might give, trying to attract attention. She stopped, taut and attent with her five senses. But there was nothing, not a rustle or stir, no tang, no touch, not the faintest scent. 'Well', she whispered to the surging silence, 'what do you want?'

With a cackle something black with feathers rose from the myrtles and flapped off through the dusk.

'What does the name Lamorna mean to you, Herbert?' Elsie asked her husband that evening as they were lying in their separate beds.

'Lamorna?' He looked at her with suspicion. 'Isn't there Lamorna Cove in Cornwall? And an artist chap, Lamorna Beech or Birch?'

'Nothing more?'

He shook his head, then yawned and snapped off the light. He was the most transparent of liars. But there was no point in arguing with him. Truth was the merchandise in which he claimed to deal. Besides, the two sleeping tablets she had taken were beginning to act. As she called 'good-night' she began to fall into the deep pit where the soul bereft of reason takes refreshment.

In her drugged slumber it seemed that a child crept into her bed as she had always wished that Frank or Elizabeth could if it had not been so bad for them. This child ran its fingers through her hair and kissed her lips and pressed its urgent body towards her in the need of warmth and solace. She held the child to her with an outflow of poignant tenderness such as she had been prevented from showing to her own children by the imagination of Herbert's disapproval. 'I don't want my kids messed up with mother-love'. She had never felt as child, wife, or mother a contentment to match this gentle visitation. 'Let it be always this', she murmured in her sleep, 'always! always! always!'

'Always what?' Herbert snapped down the switch and the savage light stabbed at her eyes.

'Turn it off! Turn it off!' she said. 'It was only a dream'.

It was not a dream, she knew; but in that harsh moment as surely as the image of a dream, Lamorna had vanished and she did not return. Neither did sleep. Through the long, whitening hours Elsie watched the gathering of the aggressive dawn. 'Reason', Herbert was fond of saying, 'is the sunlight of the mind'. Elsie had come to prefer the gentle shade. 'And yet', she thought, 'anything that is really good for you is unpleasant, like wholemeal bread, cold baths, salads of chopped raw cabbage and carrots'.

She saw her husband off to his small enlightened office and the children to their school and then she waited for Lamorna. But she did

not wait as she had during the night, utterly relaxed, unquestioning, receptive. She unlocked the stable and went up into the loft. She sat with her legs dangling through the trapdoor, taut and atten once more with the five senses and, as such, a relative of sunshine, like Vitamin A or raisins, an enemy of the shades. Lamorna did not come to her; there was no plucking of a sleeve, no slight attention as delicate as the flutter of a butterfly kiss.

But immediately the children came back from Miss Puttick's and stripped off the spinach-green blazers of St. Erkenwold's. Lamorna joined them and revealed a new delight, the trapdoor of a disused well which had been hidden by ground ivy. Elsie found them with it open as she hailed them in to tea. 'You must never lift that up again', she said, 'not even if Lamorna tells you to'.

'All right, Mummy', Frank said. He was frightened. He did not deny Lamorna's existence.

After tea she invented an excursion to Blisshaven which would occupy them till supper. She saw the danger. Lamorna who had been happy playing with them in the garden while they were undiscovered might now entice them to join her where there were no calls for tea and supper. She was not an evil, but a lonely, playful spirit and for that reason the more to be feared.

'I didn't tell you about the ghost story', said Herbert, 'because there isn't any need to say anything about nothing. But of course the children must have heard of it at school. Lamorna Coozens did apparently fall down that well and drown herself. I won't leave tomorrow until it's well and truly sealed'. He laughed. 'That's rather neat, eh? Well and truly sealed'.

Elsie did not laugh. 'The shade of that child is still here', she said. 'I tell you she was in bed with me last night. She is probably listening to us at this moment. She doesn't mean any harm, but she wants our children to play with. I want an exorcism'.

'But that's ridiculous', Herbert said. 'Do you want to ruin us? I've spent twenty years proving that God doesn't exist and now you want me to call in a priest to get rid of a ghost'.

'I'm thinking of our children'.

'And so am I', he answered. 'I tell you what I'll do. I'll get on to Theodore Brash, the psychic research man. Come to think of it, I should have done that before we moved in here'.

Brash came the next evening, a ginger giant bespattered with pale freckles. Sandy hair crept down his beefy arms and up the backs of his fingers. He had a large curved pipe into the bowl of which he stuffed a coarse mixture which exploded under a match and then went out. The children stared with a sort of fascinated repulsion at his rusty cannon-ball head, set above a suit of Harris tweed the colour of mango chutney. They did not, could not, dared not answer his questions about the 'wee ghost' they had seen. To them for one thing Lamorna was neither wee nor ghostly, and for another she did not live in the adult world which Brash dominated with his enormous presence.

He stayed for a week, regaling them with stories of ghosts he had not seen, of mediums inflating luminous balloons and beating tambourines with their big toes, of the phantom rat in Fowey and the mongoose in the Isle of Man.

'What a breath of fresh air!' Herbert exclaimed in admiration. 'Not breath!' thought Elsie. 'A gale, rather. A hurricane of sanity. A tornado of common sense'.

One day when Herbert was at the office, Elsie asked Brash why if he was so convinced that spirits did not exist he should spend so much time proving it; weren't there better things to do? 'Well', he said, taken by surprise and applying another match to his pipe, 'I might be wrong, mightn't I? The umpteenth time. I'd dearly like to see a ghost'.

Elsie felt sorry for him. His sanity was a sort of disease, an elephantiasis of common sense. Yet there was reason to be grateful to him. Even when he left, Lamorna did not return. Her gentle shade had fled his ginger vigour and never sought again the enchanted playground of her brief embodiment. The peril of the abandoned well was ended.

But so also was the magic of the hay-loft and the myrtles, the elusive presence and its fugitive caresses. Over the house and tangled gardens, the rotten hen-coops and the deserted pig-sties brooded the spirit, potent and baleful, of the sandy ghost-hunter, while Frank and Elizabeth pinched and squabbled, kicked and envied, normal children once again.

The B.B.C.'s Service on Short Waves

(continued from page 1071)

by the B.B.C.'s Regional stations. News in these foreign languages was subsequently constituted as a regular service on short wavelengths—and on the medium waves used by the English Regional stations. The overseas services were no longer a matter of short waves alone.

On the outbreak of war in 1939, all the services obviously became a matter of first-class national importance; as the war progressed, the technical programme was greatly expanded in recognition of this simple fact. Three very powerful additional stations were built—one of them, specially designed for coverage of nearby European countries, used medium wavelengths; another, a short-wave station, covered some 600 acres of land and may well still be the largest short-wave station in the world.

Whether in conditions of war or simply of cold war, some other countries have gone to great lengths to keep out, to try to make impossible, the intelligible reception of programmes originating outside their boundaries. They embark, in fact, on a policy of 'jamming'. During the war the German Propaganda Ministry, not content with broadcasting a similar service giving their very different version of the news, used an enormous number of radio transmitters, controlled by a most elaborate organisation, to try to obliterate the overseas broadcasts from this country. This jamming policy was never adopted by the B.B.C. and I have no doubt that this, in the end, indirectly contributed a great deal to the value of the British service. Jamming seems to me to involve some kind of admission of defeat.

The war ended more than eight years ago, but a very large part of the vast war-time equipment of short-wave transmitters is still used by the B.B.C. for their overseas services. Even so, certain familiar problems are still with us: as I have said, the problem of fading, for example, has never been entirely solved, and certain regions of the world, including parts of the Commonwealth, would get much better reception if one or two more relaying stations were erected at carefully chosen points. Such stations make possible a change of wavelength

en route, which is usually desirable over very long distances. The short-wave station in Johore is an example of this.

In a way it is unfortunate, or so it seems to me, that in recent years a large majority of the countries of the world have decided to set up overseas short-wave services, although in most cases not on anything approaching the scale of the British service. Unfortunate, because this has led to the acute overcrowding of the available bands of wavelengths. The result is that not only do the newcomers find it almost impossible to find room for their new transmitters, but the old-established stations are encountering more and more interference, apart from any interference which is deliberate. So far it has not been found possible to solve these difficulties by international co-operation, and it remains to be seen how matters will develop in the future. Man-made overcrowding is the greatest difficulty facing a short-wave service at the present time, because technical developments are unlikely to abolish it entirely.

I think the short-wave engineer might be said to have enough on his hands; but still I am often asked when it will be possible to transmit television programmes from this country for reception overseas. This has been done on special occasions by means of microwave wireless links, which fed the programme from London to the transmitters in western Europe concerned; it is a process of great complexity. It is always dangerous to prophesy about scientific developments, especially in these days, but I think it is fairly safe to say that truly direct transmission over several hundreds of miles is not yet 'just round the corner'.—*Home Service*

The B.B.C. has published a book entitled *The Year that Made the Day*, which describes how the Corporation planned and prepared the Coronation-day broadcasts. The book, which is printed in photogravure, is lavishly illustrated and contains a foreword by the Director-General. The price is 6s. and it may be obtained through booksellers or newsagents.

A Private View of Versailles

By JOHN RUSSELL

IT is less than two years since the French Secretary of State for Fine Arts first gave the alarm about Versailles; but already a great deal of money has been raised, work has begun on the first of the repairs, and the new curator of the Château, M. Van der Kemp, has started to re-embellish the state apartments with appropriate furniture and objects of art.

The National Book League's Versailles exhibition, which will be on

view till the middle of January at No. 7 Albemarle Street, London, is not one of the more exuberant of the devices by which all this is being financed. It has not the reckless excitement of the Champs Elysées tombola, in which a new motor-car was only one of the prizes. The capital engaged is doubtless much smaller than that invested in the film in which Sacha Guitry is to add Louis XIV to his gallery of historical impersonations. And its presentation is more orthodox than that of the *spectacle stéréophonique* with which visitors were diverted last summer; there is no flood-lighting in Albemarle Street, no march by Lully in the air, and no member of the Comédie Française to make the walls resound with the ruminations of the Grand Siècle.

Our London exhibition is, in fact, an intimate, scholarly affair; and one admirably designed to break down our traditional indifference to Versailles. To most English visitors, Versailles seems affected, monotonous, impersonal and cold. It has none of the haphazard charm of Fontainebleau. It is, in short, too professional. Only when endowed by English maiden ladies with the tedious wraith of Marie Antoinette—only then does it exert a certain wan fascination.

This difficulty is mainly one of scale. Mansart's unvarying garden façade contrasts disagreeably with that rose-pink nucleus of Versailles: the Cour de Marbre. There is little, in the traditional tour of the interior, to suggest that the Château was ever inhabited by individual human beings; and nobody could infer, as the Grand Canal peters out in a Metroland meadow, that only a hundred yards to the right of it is a deserted forest, with manorial farms and great green silences. Most visitors miss half the point of Versailles; and what they do not miss they dislike. The National Book League exhibition cannot bring us the *petits appartements* or let us loose among those untrodden *allées*, but it does illustrate, with great ingenuity, the kind of life that was lived at Versailles. It uses a microscope, where the tourist is usually handed binoculars; and in doing so it restores an aspect of the Château which has inevitably become obscured: the extreme fastidiousness, that is to say, of its original detail.

Much of this detail was lost even in the seventeenth century. The

silver furniture, for instance, was melted down in 1689, and the many-coloured marble floors were taken out five years earlier. What we see now has been long battered and long abused; but at Albemarle Street we re-enter the original climate of Versailles. Here, for instance, are the decorated menu-books; Louis XIV's handwritten notes on how best to visit the gardens; a volume of motets composed for use in the Chapelle; a record of plays performed in Madame de Pompadour's

private theatre; the vice, brace, and bit with which Louis XVI amused himself in his private workshop; Marie Antoinette's private pattern-book or *Gazette des Atours*; and one of Dorbay's working drawings for the forecourt, countersigned by Colbert. Generation after generation of royal bibliophiles is commemorated in the remarkable selection of bindings; and, to vary the legend of a frivolous aristocracy, there is the translation of Julius Caesar by Louis XIV, Louis XV's essay on European rivers, and also the translation of Gibbon for which Louis XVI is said to have been re-

ponsible. There are souvenirs, too, of Condé and Turenne, Bossuet and the androgynous Chevalier d'Éon. We are reminded not only of kings and queens, but of the kitchen-gardener, the military tailor, and the resident scribe. There is a copy of the novel of La Fontaine which the author read aloud, in the gardens of Versailles, to Molière, Racine, and Boileau. There are also pictures, though these are not the best-chosen section of the exhibition; and an instructive catalogue.

And on his way out the visitor can turn once again to the judgment of Saint-Simon (here expressed in the great diarist's own hand). It is a disobliging judgment. But of his two main complaints—bad taste and inordinate expenditure—the expense must now seem amply justified; and where the bad taste is concerned, it would be difficult to secure a conviction on the evidence of Albemarle Street.

For it is not yet at Versailles itself that the intimacies of the Château can best be studied at leisure. Many of its choicest components (Le Vau's Trianon de Porcelaine, for instance, and his Menagerie, and the Grotto of Thetis) have been destroyed. The original Bramantesque articulation of the garden front can only be glimpsed by the architectural scholar. No amount of fastidious refurnishing can recapture the interior which Saint-Simon knew and groused about. But at Albemarle Street, for the next few weeks, the privacies of Versailles lie open, with only a precautionary pane of glass between us and them.

The subject for the parody competition in next month's 'First Reading' (Third Programme, January 30) will be Graham Greene. Entries (not more than 400 words) should be sent to the Editor, 'First Reading', B.B.C., Broadcasting House, London, W.1, not later than January 9.



The Orangery and the Château de Versailles, by Jacques-André Portail (1695-1759), from the National Book League's exhibition

The Listener's Book Chronicle

Pleasure of Ruins. By Rose Macaulay.
Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 25s.

ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN brought up, as Miss Rose Macaulay clearly has, on the Bible and the history and literature of Greece and Rome is naturally more drawn to the ruins of the Near and Middle East and the Mediterranean countries than, say, to the tumbled chaos of San Francisco after the earthquake. It is therefore with these parts of the world that her absorbing book deals most lovingly and at greatest length in each chapter, whether it be about the Haunting Gods, Palaces, Ghostly Streets, or the Stupendous Past; it is their civilisations that she evokes after side trips to Xanadu, Zimbabwe, or Tintagel. At each site she describes the people, their arts and wars, their destruction, and the final use of their ruined cities by Arabs and Turks—two races for whom ancient buildings were merely convenient quarries of cut stone, just as the French and English carried off the columns of Leptis Magna. She tells us about the life of ruins behind their screens of bushes and trees, and then, in the centuries after the Renaissance, their rediscovery by travellers.

After that the ruins were denuded by dilettanti searching for statues to adorn houses and gardens all over Europe, written up exhaustively by every visitor, and measured by architects to inform taste at home how to rebuild the drawing room and the temples in the garden with correct mouldings. At last they were excavated and finally tidied up, the bushes removed, the walls capped with cement to keep out the rain, and gravel paths and neat banks of grass laid out to mark the vanished walls of refectories. Miss Macaulay traces with variations such melancholy histories for the lovely ruins she describes, making us drunk as she is (and as Milton and Marlowe were) on the names of the vanished cities of Greece, Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, and China.

Her chief delight in ruins is the aesthetic pleasure she derives from contemplating them, and her topographical skill is so great that we can see them too, and with such clarity that the black-and-white reproductions in the book are replaced for us by the aquatint-colours of the mind's eye, clean and pale in the dustless sun of the imagination. She also reconstructs the civilities of life before the cities fell, the beautiful nonsense of Sybaris, and the olive stones spat out on the pavements at Olympia twenty-five centuries ago. And there are fascinating speculations which she just mentions: what were the techniques used before the invention of gunpowder to destroy a town; what fun it must have been—unluckily a pleasure quite as intense as any creative pleasure—to sack a city; what a delight to be able to say Nebuchadnezzar touched that stone or to see the room where Heracles was conceived.

There are perhaps too many long passages where image is piled upon image in a cumulative list of objects and reflections, for the trouble about ruins is that they stir in one only a limited range of emotions, from wonder, fear, anger, and melancholy, to *Timor Mortis Conturbat Me*. One may regret, therefore, that Miss Macaulay did not sacrifice some of her descriptions of ruins in order to expand the minor issues, and that she did not treat a few other ruins with the exactitude and detail which she gives to Rome.

The eighteenth-century travellers looking at ruins certainly lamented the vanished life of the past; but the eighteenth century was also busy with a lot of fine buildings of its own and so

was the nineteenth. Only this century could have produced a book where there can be little smugness behind the sorrow; we have the advantage of knowing almost for the first time since the sack of Rome in 1527 what a shattered and massacred town is like, we can see the ashes, and the shadows burnt into the walls of houses, but what can we offer to future travellers and excavators? The Senate House of London university, the murals in the Palace of Westminster? The only gleam of hope for a distinguished posterity for us seems to be in engineering, the dams and bridges, and the sadistic beauty of useless inventions like fighter planes, which one day will be disinterred, squashed and rusty like old tins.

The Golden Echo. By David Garnett.
Chatto and Windus. 21s.

Mr. David Garnett has had so many eminent seniors in his immediate vicinity, he has appeared so often in their memoirs and biographies as a flitting youthful figure, that he is apt to remain in the mind as a permanently young person. But that is all a long time ago now; the first volume of his autobiography stops in 1914, and the secure, close-knit, confident intelligentsia of which he writes is almost as far from us as the society of Holland House. Two world wars and a social revolution have given it a premature historical status, and though many of the most distinguished actors on this scene are still with us, their setting seems far more remote than it should do by the warrant of cold chronology. The period between the aesthetic nineties and the assassination at Sarajevo has already its distinct flavour, and material for its social and mental history is already beginning to accumulate. It is from books such as Mr. Garnett's that it will have to be compiled.

Let us imagine that we have never met anyone from Mr. Garnett's world, and see how it looks, as a detached historical phenomenon. Of course it is an intellectual world, of artists, scholars and scientists; and the interests of *l'homme moyen sensuel* are far, far away. Such circles have existed since; the striking thing about this one is that it is a circle composed of many interlocking family circles. The modern intellectual rarely has parents, brothers or sisters; he lives in a vacuum and a small flat. Mr. Garnett's characters live in family houses, in most of which large broods of children are reared; they grow up with other broods whose parents are closely connected with theirs, by ties of friendship or kinship. There is no pressure of conformity; tastes and opinions may vary from Puritan austerity to conscious Bohemianism; but the high thinkers and the low livers, the Fabians and the aesthetes, even the young and the old, seem able to meet on some sort of common ground. Some would say that this freedom is the result of economic freedom. That is certainly not the whole story; but it is equally certainly true that the people in this book, though neither rich nor worldly, enjoyed extraordinary liberty of action and movement. Mr. Garnett thinks of his parents as poor; and certainly a publisher's reader enjoyed no very large share of the fleshpots of the late capitalist world. Yet these same parents pack him cheerfully off on a holiday to Russia—because he rather thinks he is in love with a girl who happens to live there. Much of this liberty, on the other hand, springs from a willingness to do things the hard way; and people seem far readier to set out on fifty-mile walks and sleep in small uncomfortable tents than their counterparts today.

Mr. Garnett's account of this vanished Arcadia is fresh, informal and inconsequential. His people all know each other so well and are so much interrelated that one sometimes has the sense of being the only stranger at a large family party. The array of Christian names sometimes becomes confusing, and one would be grateful for a little more biographical, genealogical and chronological information. But the portraits are so lively, the observations so natural, objective and unconventional, that this hardly matters. Mr. Garnett could scarcely have helped being a writer, as we realise when we remember his grandfather's *Twilight of the Gods*; his father's career as the friend, champion, and adviser of many of the best novelists of his time, and his mother's vast and distinguished labours as a translator from the Russian. But Mr. David Garnett was trained as a biologist, and it is perhaps that which gives his perception so much acute actuality.

Of course he has had a multitude of fascinating opportunities. There is a brilliant and unexpected portrait of Lawrence; glimpses of the Bloomsbury circle, which we look forward to seeing more of in the next volume, besides the attractive and unsentimentalised picture of his own family. It is the Russian scenes, however, that make the book unusual among literary autobiographies. As a child Mr. Garnett visited Russia with his mother, and at a time when most of his contemporaries were going through the usual schoolboy round he had the exceptional opportunity of seeing life under the old Empire. The consequences of this Russian connection follow him to England, and there is a unique portrait gallery of anarchists and political refugees, from Prince Kropotkin down. Besides this vivid account of a rich external scene Mr. Garnett also gives us the story of his own development, perfectly amiable and without dramatic rejections, from the rather unreal, rather defeatist Puritanism of his parental background to a more expansive kind of life and human relationships. This is a personal book, but it is also an informal chapter of cultural history. We can be glad that there is more to come.

Sir John Moore. By Carola Oman.
Hodder and Stoughton. 42s.

Miss Oman's work is largely based on Moore's military journal, a day-to-day record of the campaigns and expeditions on which he was almost continuously engaged from the outbreak of war with revolutionary France to his death in 1809. This remarkable document was first published in 1904 by Sir Frederick Maurice, whose considered opinion was that among the records left behind them by great men of action there was nothing to compare with it in continuity and completeness. At that time the original manuscript was supposed to have been lost and Sir Frederick Maurice's edition was taken from a copy made by Lady Napier, formerly Miss Caroline Fox, the only woman Moore is supposed to have wished to marry. Miss Oman, who has discovered the original manuscript, confirms that Sir Frederick Maurice's edition is a faithful reproduction of Moore's original, except for a few deletions made by Lady Napier from motives of discretion.

From the point of view of a biographer the handling of a document of this kind presents considerable technical difficulties. Miss Oman's solution is to treat it as the scenario for a work of some 300,000 words, depicting Moore's life as seen through his own eyes and those of his friends and relations, with whose letters and

other documents the journal is supplemented. Virtually the whole of the journal has been re-written, expanded, dramatised, and put into *oratio obliqua*, the nearest bearable English equivalent to the historic present. Comments, explanations, or other overt interventions on the part of the author are avoided, the facts being allowed as far as possible to speak for themselves. The book, in short, is an example of the Guedalla way of writing of history.

Miss Oman's work illustrates both the merits and the defects of this technique. Its merits are that it reconciles solid and exhaustive research with the qualities of vividness and readability. Its defects, however, are serious. In the pursuit of the picturesque, it too often relies on meretricious devices such as, for example, the following inflation of Moore's 'We landed at the island of Rozza this morning':

On the afternoon of January 14, a four-oared boat came alongside that smart but not young frigate H.M.S. *Lowestoffe*, lying at anchor three miles off the north-west Corsican coast, and a midshipman reported to Captain Wolseley that the three gentlemen, their servants and their baggage, had been put ashore at Isola Rossa, etc., etc.

Incidents are 'faked' as when Moore's account of an interview with Wellesley is eked out by importing into it most of a letter from Wellesley to Moore of the previous day. Nor does Moore's account of the interview, as printed by Maurice, bear out that part of Miss Oman's redaction which represents him as rejecting Wellesley's suggested explanation of the Government's decision to subordinate Moore to two senior officers (one of whose ages Miss Oman advances by twenty years). It is also characteristic of this way of writing history that no attempt is made to criticise the one-sided picture presented in Moore's journal of this typical example of a clash between soldiers and politicians. All that is thought necessary is to report Moore's own view and leave it at that. Surely this is to abdicate one of the primary functions of the historian.

Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony; with writings on other musical subjects. By R. Vaughan Williams. Oxford. 15s.

Composers may well be sometimes amazed (and amused) as they read descriptions of themselves and their works in biographies, or elsewhere; but they are no doubt aware that, in their turn, they are as likely to amaze (and amuse) when they write about their fellow craftsmen. From the nature of the case, however, a special interest attaches to what one composer has to say about another, particularly when the composer-author wields so forthright and stimulating a pen as Dr. Vaughan Williams.

All but two of these writings (the author considers them too informal to be called essays) have appeared elsewhere before, and the first of these two, 'Beethoven's Choral Symphony' (1939-40), the longest and most important writing in the book, is also the one most calculated to amaze, and amuse. It will undoubtedly amaze some readers to learn that the nineteenth-century idiom is naturally repugnant to Dr. Vaughan Williams ('my natural love', he says, 'is much more the Gothic-Teutonic idiom of J. S. Bach and his predecessors . . .'); but many musicians will agree with his criticisms, directly but modestly expressed, of Beethoven's ornamentation in some passages of the last two movements of the work, even if they do not find, in the famous 'Turkish' episode in the *finale* (as revealed by the author) suggestions of a drunken soldier, beer, and a kiss from the barmaid! If Dr. Vaughan Williams seems here to be trailing his coat, his deep admiration for and understanding of what

he calls 'this unapproachable masterpiece' are clearly evident on every page of the essay, and are all the more convincing for not being 'breathless with adoration'.

The writings printed before have been revised, but in 'Bach the great bourgeois' (a talk broadcast in 1950 and first printed in this journal) Dr. Vaughan Williams, who forcibly expressed in it his aversion to the performance of Bach 'in the precise periwig style', retains his disbelief that Bach ever played on 'the baroque style of organ', which he stigmatises (in spite of much evidence to the contrary) as 'this bubble-and-squeak type of instrument'. Controversy aroused by this statement has not yet died down: much, no doubt, to the delight of the author.

There is a moving appreciation of Gustav Holst, both as man and composer, reprinted from *Music and Letters* (well supplied, as is the Beethoven essay, with musical examples), and the fragment of autobiography that appeared in Hubert Foss' book on Vaughan Williams will also be found amongst these writings. The rest of them, brief but always to the point, include a very entertaining account of composing for the films, reprinted from the *R.C.M. Magazine*, and a just tribute to Stanford, given as a broadcast talk on the occasion of his centenary (1953) and first printed in *London Calling*. It is to be regretted that the lecture on 'English Folk Songs', reprinted in Percy Young's recent biography, and the celebrated article 'Who wants the English composer?' which first came out in the *R.C.M. Magazine*, are not to be found in this volume, for they represent an important part of the composer's views of his art and would have satisfactorily rounded off the whole picture.

My Political Life. By L. S. Amery. Vol. Two. War and Peace 1914-1929. Hutchinson. 25s.

Mr. Amery emerges from the second volume of his political autobiography not merely as an impudent imperialist and protectionist but also a man of inexhaustible energy and courage. H. G. Wells saw him as a lad of fifteen playing with battleships and soldiers. Though it is untrue to say that he never grew up, he has surely never grown old. Indeed this book, written at the age of eighty, shows his zest for life to be unquenched. Far from him was Baldwin's 'evasive inertia'—though he was destined to reach the heights of power as a Minister under Baldwin. Nor would he stomach Balfour's philosophical cynicism. His own master was Milner, to whom he pays a fine tribute, and as Colonial Secretary he ever bore Milner's precepts at the forefront of his mind.

Though Mr. Amery was always a Member of Parliament assiduous in his duties, much of these fifteen years was spent in moving about Europe. We see him in France, the Balkans, and the Middle East during the war; in Palestine or Geneva afterwards; climbing mountains round Chamonix; sailing in the Admiralty yacht; flying to Baghdad; and at the end of the book travelling right round the world as Colonial Secretary, making 300 speeches. He was always a glutton for work. In 1914 he rushed headlong into the recruiting campaign until Kitchener objected to his signing proclamations in his name; then he became under Sir Maurice Hankey an assistant secretary to the Cabinet for whom he drafted decisions when the Cabinet was in doubt. After the war for a time his responsibilities were better defined but more limited. As Under-Secretary to Milner Mr. Amery was soon to plunge into emigration schemes and as Financial Secretary to the Admiralty he helped to draw up the famous memorandum dissenting from the findings of the Geddes 'Axe' Committee. After the fall of Lloyd George, in which he played a leading part, he was appointed First Lord of

the Admiralty by Bonar Law, and when Baldwin became Prime Minister he volunteered to become Chancellor of the Exchequer; Baldwin preferred the ex-Liberal, MacKenna. But when in 1925 Baldwin gave the Chancellorship to the ex-Liberal Churchill, it was more than Mr. Amery could bear, and he wrote a long letter to Baldwin (printed here) suggesting that he should replace Churchill. Again his offer was rejected.

This is what Mr. Amery has to say about Baldwin and Churchill in 1925. After remarking that Baldwin's object in appointing Churchill had been purely political—'far better to keep so restless a character contented and busy inside the team'—he writes

That as a convinced Free Trader Churchill was likely to throw all the weight of his key position and dominating personality against the policy which Baldwin had put in the forefront of his election address probably never occurred to the Prime Minister's curiously inconsequential mind. In any case Baldwin was increasingly comforting himself with the view that a Prime Minister's business was not to shape or impose policies, but to prevent the mischievous policies of others by carrying on in office.

Other *obiter dicta* of this character enliven the book; Mr. Amery's aspersions on our recent policy towards Dr. Moussadeq are worth noting; and there are some illuminating anecdotes, for example, that which throws doubt on *The Times History*'s account of the relations between Lloyd George and Northcliffe. Lloyd George told Carson: 'What do you think that fellow Northcliffe just had the impudence to demand?' He told me I must make him a member of the Peace Delegation. I told him to go to hell'. Carson told this story to Bonar Law. 'He didn't go to hell', said Bonar Law in his gentle, long-suffering way, 'He came here and has just given me hell instead'. An entertaining contribution to modern history.

The Herring Gull's World

By Niko Tinbergen. Collins. 18s.

The herring gull, Mr. Tinbergen tells us, builds up each year anew the highly complex structure of its breeding colony (he explains quite simply how it does this) and learns to recognise its mate, its neighbours, and its nest-site—but not its eggs nor even its own chicks until they are four or five days old. It knows too that a tasty mussel can be cracked by being let fall from a height, and takes them up time and again and lets them fall—but as readily over soft mud or water as over rocks or stones. The chicks in their concealing down, when told to take cover by the parent gull, may run towards a trespasser in the colony and crouch at his feet; and, in experiments, will respond times without number to the crudest imitation of a parent's bill by pecking to be fed, although it never results in their getting any food—yet they survive. The herring gull in fact, endowed though it is with many graces—flight, a vision decidedly more subtle and acute than ours, a most adequate language of sign, mime, and voice, strength, beauty, and a hearty appetite—has nevertheless a woeful 'lack of insight into ends': so much so that any attempt to describe its behaviour in terms of our own is bound to fail. So also would be any interpretation attempted by anyone but a highly skilled, severely disciplined, and very exceptional man—just such a one as Niko Tinbergen.

Much of the charm and modesty of the man himself comes out in these pages: his intense delight in being out of doors, his joy in living among his beloved gulls and, above all else perhaps, a simplicity derived not from having little to say but from his sheer mastery of his subject. He sees no need to coin new words nor to be drawn into the long high-falutin' explanations beloved by some of his fellow workers—one

suspects at times to cover things that they themselves have failed to understand. With its excellent plates and text illustrations this book is an aid, a model, and an inspiration for all who seek to study animal behaviour.

The Vermilion Boat. By Sudhin N. Ghose. Michael Joseph. 18s.

Inter lineas latet cor meum, confesses Dr. Ghose on the page reserved usually for dedications; and his book, devoted to the discovery that free will consists in obedience to the heart's imperatives, is as complex as the intricate system of the blood's circulation. It all begins with the vermilion boat which as a boy he wished to take into the Palit Mansion in Chandranagore to sail on the various ponds that graced its exotically named courtyards. Mummi-da, his aunt, forbade the vessel's entry, but Jigin-da, his friend and later his irresponsible but delightful guardian, smuggled the boat in. Where should he sail it secretly but in the Sandalwood Tank,

so named because in the distant past it had contained sandalwood to fill the mansion with its lovely fragrance, but now shunned by Mummi-da because of the noisome aroma rising from the weeds rotting in its stagnation? How was the boy to know that what appeared to be water-plants were in fact moccasin snakes which Jigin-da was feeding on a special diet in the faith that vegetarianism would change their poisonous nature?

This narrow escape—for the boy stripped off his clothes and dived in to investigate the mystery—leads as naturally to the boy's discovery of the falsity of the Swami's austerity and a hundred other things as the deposition of a Pippala seed from the intestines of a turtle-dove leads to the destruction of the ancient buildings of Bengal. And what more understandable than that when the boy has grown to studenthood and, rejecting the clamorous overtures of the heart, has chosen suicide, riding the storm in a bamboo boat of vermilion, he should be rescued by the tame porpoise from the

Temple of Love whom he has fed so devotedly, despite his initial repulsion from its pig-like appearance, on bunches of radishes.

The heart has its bright and crowded arteries, its dark, loaded veins and also its many vesicles, some lying very near the surface and others deeply hidden and in their function rather obscure. Dr. Ghose's imagination is as intricate in this subtle work of autobiography. It makes no pretence at being factual or encyclopaedic. Pure invention can raise incidents to a symbolic level which is truer than mere fact. Dr. Ghose, who is clearly one of the least gullible of men in Calcutta, can make that city as fabulous as the capital of Haroun al Raschid. Myth is at his elbow as he writes. History prompts him. The words of a wise man must compete in argument with the behaviour of randy fish. A snake has more important things to say perhaps than Comrade Chum and laughter is more sanitary than metaphysics. This is one of those rare books which is at the same time a work of literature and enjoyable from beginning to end.

New Novels

The Priest. By Beatrix Beck. Michael Joseph. 10s. 6d.

The Ever-Interesting Topic. By William Cooper. Cape. 12s. 6d.

BY now everybody must be tired of drawing distinctions between the English and the French novel, but they go on being true, and the more evident this becomes: the French with their psychological adventurousness, extreme situations, critical decisions, extraordinary moral dilemmas, and unusual temptations; and the English who never make up their minds about anything, refuse to be surprised, have always known that people were odd, and prefer to observe their social obliquities and oppositions rather than the secret places of the heart. This is not what we used to be told: deep and true and tender, that is what we thought ourselves to be: while the French—but the new philosophy puts all in doubt; and we have to get used to our new character—diabolically clever, yet decadent and unsound, compared with the simple empire-builder's virtue of the Americans; elegant and superficial, compared with the turbulent profundity of the French. I suppose it is since Germany and Russia have been lost to European civilisation that the parts have had to be redistributed: and perhaps as far as the novel is concerned we had better accept it gracefully, make the most of the genuinely long-standing English tradition of social comedy (with a decent hint at deeper moral implications): and, as Jane Austen put it 'let other pens deal with guilt and misery'. Even the most anxiety-ridden of modern English writers seem to wear their guilt a little uneasily, as though they had not been quite born to it.

Beatrix Beck's novel *The Priest*, awarded the Prix Goncourt in 1952, is an excellent example of the kind of novel that could not be English: and also an illustration of the factors that have brought this difference about. My only information about the author is derived from the back cover: but from that, from the sharp authentic impact of the incidents and from the artlessness of the book's construction, I should divine an element of autobiography. It is the story of a young Frenchwoman who has lost her Jewish husband in the war. She is living in a provincial town during the German occupation, and suffers the usual privations, shame, worry, and hunger: and, in addition, acute fear for her own half-Jewish child and her many Jewish friends. She does her best to help them; she hates the occupying forces, not only as the enemies of France,

but as the embodiment of an evil that she sees the more clearly on account of her Jewish connections. Her work is dull and underpaid, her life a sordid and fear-ridden scramble; she becomes embittered and savage. She has been brought up a Catholic, but has become an atheist left-winger; and religion now seems only a senseless mockery. One day she enters a church and goes into the confessional, with the intention of insulting the priest and gibing at his faith. The interview does not go as she expects. The priest she speaks to is in character and outlook reminiscent of the 'worker-priests' of whom we have heard so much lately. She meets him again, and a bitter mocking struggle begins between them, in which he counters her every move and eventually brings her back to the faith. She also discovers that she loves him—as a penitent should not love her confessor. The tenseness of this situation, and its results in her relations with other people are treated with absolute and unspectacular fidelity. I know of few novels where a precisely limited spiritual struggle is dramatised so completely: and on this account if on no other it is a distinguished piece of work.

But the book is also remarkable for giving an honest, moving, sometimes terrifying, but always totally untheatrical account of life in France under the occupation. If the English novel now looks very different from the French it is largely because England has gone through no experiences like these. The blitz, for all its horror, was defence against an external enemy; and generated none of the tension and conflicts of war and occupation in one's own home. This, and the always greater sharpness of ideological conflict in France, means that in contemporary French fiction we are moving in territory whose difference from our own it would be foolish to underestimate. This is as it should be. The French have always done us most good when they have been most different from ourselves.

Let us descend from these altitudes, and permit ourselves to be amused. *The Ever-Interesting Topic* of Mr. William Cooper's title, you will be surprised to hear, is sex. But there is no cause for alarm: the book is about sex as a topic, not as an activity. To be precise, the theme is the introduction of sex-education into an ancient and ritualistic public school. Of course the boys know all about it already, so the

well-meant lectures afford only the slightest stimulus to the normal adolescent emotional life. On the masters their effect is very different: they generate a storm in which the progressive headmaster loses his job; his place is taken by a Savonarolaesque successor who lasts only a week; after which the school returns to normal.

One of the surest recipes for a light novel is the tempest in a tea-cup. This is because it provides a quickly prepared and easily digestible kind of irony. Clerical or academic imbroglios, so world-shaking to the participants, so trivial to everyone else, provide the reader with a simple and agreeable dual role. On the one hand, he is absorbed in the cosy intricacies of domestic politics, on the other, he is standing outside in the big world, feeling a gratified superiority at seeing things in the proper scale. Mr. Cooper is well aware of these advantages, and makes the most of them: but he does a great deal else besides. His theme gives many opportunities for a rather cheap humour—and he very nicely avoids taking them. His characters are well-differentiated institutional types—the number of people who have recognised their colleagues in them must already be large. But the interplay of motives and personalities is much too delicate to be drawn from stock: the whole scene is observed with the same intelligent, benevolent, and impartial irony. We have long known—or if we haven't, it has not been for want of fiction to inform us—that progressive sociologists are often personally insensitive, that moral fervour is a poor guide to dealing with the common run of humanity, that loyalty to an institution often coincides with loyalty to an enlargement of one's own ego. But these positions have not often been established with such firm shades of comedy. This is mostly provided by the masters; the serious emotional interest by the boys, who are treated with a polite and affectionate sympathy. And in the end, the whole hierarchy of Monteagle and its values is put where it belongs. 'The Prefects followed the course in life that had been laid down for them: . . . as the year passed, their external manner altered but they never lost the relics of stupefying urbanity and colossal snobbism which is the hallmark of the old Monteaglian'.

In its way, a wise as well as a shrewd and amusing novel.

GRAHAM HOUGH

CRITIC ON THE HEARTH

Weekly comments on B.B.C. programmes by independent contributors

Television Broadcasting DOCUMENTARY

Knights Errant

SIR MALCOLM SARGENT's talk on the 'Messiah' music was a television *tour de force*. The assurance required to attack the attention of a vast audience for half an hour, talking at random and at the same time not straying far from a central unifying theme, is considerable. It does not always go with humbleness of heart. Sir Malcolm showed that quality, though it may well be that conductors of orchestras are more concerned than I know to pay their just dues to the composers on whom their public esteem so largely rests. That is not to underrate the importance of the interpreters and executants of music. They do much for its glory and no doubt composers in their turn have often been less than fair. Sir Malcolm Sargent left us sure of the genuineness of his regard for the genius of Handel. It was a well-balanced display of self-assertion and genuflection; one of the most satisfying programmes in the 'talks' category that I remember. The cameras illustrated it with neat precision; their contribution was of the hand-in-glove order of efficiency and added a good deal to our viewing pleasure. That the programme succeeded in its purpose of provoking interest in the next night's performance of the Christmas music there can be no doubt. We were induced to give our attention, not begrudge it, to make it an act of piety. We were enabled to see behind the oratorio, as behind a picture by Rembrandt, the wonder of the light that was in its creator's mind. This was television being adult, a programme to convince the dissidents that it can rise above the mediocrity of its day-to-day activities.

Sir Malcolm Sargent is not one of those personalities for whom television is this nettle, danger, out of which they hope to pluck the future safety of their self-esteem. Viewing in mixed company recently a programme in which a well-known user of another medium of expression was making a rare television appearance, I heard gasps of consternation, as if the ruin of a reputation was in prospect. 'I shall never be able to listen to that man on the radio again'. The personality imponderable in television is alarming. The wish to see this medium rigidly controlled may be instinctive good sense. Tele-

vision could be, perhaps, has already been, a maker of false renown due to fortuitous circumstances. Nothing could be more cheapening to public life or more ominous, possibly, for the democratic idea.

The personality of the President of the Royal Academy, Sir Gerald Kelly, R.A., carried the weight of the programme from Burlington House, where the Flemish pictures fitted snugly into our screens as he described them with clear-voiced authority; he has a hospitable relish for communicating the majesty of the great painters. The fact that journalistic obsession with the 'story' had roused fear, expectation, probably hope, that he



'Fifty Years of Flight' on December 17: C. H. Gibbs-Smith with a model of the aircraft in which the Wright brothers made their first flight



Sir Gerald Kelly, P.R.A., during the programme on the Exhibition of Flemish Art at the Royal Academy on December 15

would be as imprudent in expressing himself as on a previous occasion may have increased the size of his audience. If the merely curious were disappointed by the anti-climax of a comparatively mild expletive, they were doubtless rewarded by his mammalian fixation in discussing the lush Rubens which he had helped to restore for the Dulwich Art Gallery. Serious-minded viewers, becoming impatient at that stage, could take comfort in the fact that many people were seeing art masterpieces for the first time and that out of the enlightening process good might come. It is hardly to be doubted that the P.R.A. made a great hit with viewers. His easy conversational style gives him access to a myriad



Mark Hambourg at the piano on December 13

ears which would be closed to a lecturer. A famous novelist friend of his wrote that 'the Royal Academy continues to provide grandiose evidence that the flight of time is an illusion'. As to that, it seems that it is Sir Gerald who has the last laugh.

'Any Questions?' from Bristol proved all over again that sound radio is far from obsolete as a means of communication. I now finally declare for it in its sound-only form, if only for the reason that on sound fatuous questions seem slightly less fatuous than they do on television. Watching a panel pretend that they are not fatuous simply adds to the embarrassment all round. Also, there is the feeling that it is a deliberately manufactured show, whereas, as listeners only, we are not distracted by production tricks and shifts of emphasis. It is interesting to experiment with the knobs during these programmes of discussion and opinion: turn down the picture, bring up the sound. You then have to decide which voices are more interesting than which faces. Fun! The panel at Bristol was never searchingly tested by the questioners and the argument for a sharper supervision of questions by the producer-in-charge was certainly strengthened by this programme. What is desired is not censorship but editing. Dull intellects should not be allowed to afflict us with their efforts to prove otherwise.

Twenty minutes in which to tell and illustrate the story of human flight, spanning the fifty years between the brothers Wright and Neville Duke, was a *multum in parvo* experiment which did not succeed. Some day television will recapture the exceptional excitements of the early flights. There was too little to suggest them in this programme. 'Asian Club', on Friday night, was novel, stimulating, and possibly important television, very much in the mood of the times. Sir Compton Mackenzie's wish for a free-and-easy exchange of ideas was well enough, but I can believe that it left his audience on both sides of the screen feeling that opportunities had been missed.

Saturday's rugby football from Cardiff was something short of Homeric sight-seeing but that was no fault of the cameras. They were remarkably vigilant, considering the pace of the game.

REGINALD POUND

DRAMA

Festive but Restive

WHAT A HOWL of rage, unhallowed, uncharitable, and unchristian, must have escaped the throats of viewers and even viewerettes when last week Amateur Boxing gave place to 'Messiah'. Like a lioness robbed of her whelps, the great British public must have trembled with fury in every limb. Instead of grunts, groans, and the sound of bloodstained leather on marmaladed flesh, we heard the shepherds abiding in the fields, and also saw, if we had our eyes open, which I had only intermittently, Sir Malcolm Sargent, the conductor, with rows of musicians in faultless evening dress 'sawring away regardless'; and, behind, rank upon rank of seated choristers resting their bellows for the stupendous blow out of the final choruses.

After the previous sporting comments about these 'youngsters' and the cuts reopening on their nose bridges, it was perhaps doubly wonderful to hear the familiar and wonderful text by Jennens and the old and wonderful music by Handel: rightly and deservedly 'Messiah' is a masterpiece revered among musicians and the humble: rightly, then, it comes to the single national service. But, and the qualification is a fine one, does it really gain by being seen? As it happened the four soloists were personable, but has one ever enjoyed 'O thou that tellest' the better for being able to see the contralto breathing? If the faces of the boxing commentators can be hidden and their voices can remain disembodied ('I'm afraid that youngster's nose is giving out a small trickle again now'), then surely the great sibylline voices of the soloists uplifted in the consolations of 'Messiah' may also be allowed to remain unseen, unencumbered, unfleshed. But, when all is said, what a benediction it was in this often vulgar television service of ours to be thrust into company with genius of this order. It blessed the week.

The other musical offering was Rossini's 'La Cenerentola', which we had previously seen, in its Italian version, at Glyndebourne. This was a studio job in English and had in the Cinderella role Gertrude Holt, who had made such a very happy impression in 'La Belle Hélène' and in 'Hansel and Gretel'. The only snag about Rossini in English is that you cannot really tease out the vowel sounds far enough (without sounding absurdly affected) to make the effect

that the music does in Italian. Arthur Jacobs had done the English version and the indomitable George Foa was at the picture-controls. No doubt large sections of the public felt slighted; connoisseurs of Rossinian roulade and bravura, too, perhaps: but a 'third estate' of enjoyers, the ones who will write 'We never liked an opera before, now we are mad to hear another', has to be remembered.

Ballet should not be considered the only sort of dancing worthy of highbrow respect. I have always hugely admired the kind of national talent to be seen in our *palais de danse* (or 'dancings'), to use the French word for that English institution which appears to have no distinctive plural.



As seen by the viewer: Sir Malcolm Sargent conducting 'Messiah' on December 16, and (right) a section of the Huddersfield Choral Society



Photographs: John Cura

Here Syd and Vera, Norman and Maureen, step it with the liveliest and most decorous art, night in, night out. We may not excel at the gopals or the black-bottom, but few nations in the world appear to be so gifted when it comes to well-behaved foxtrotting. Prizes are won in the unlikeliest corners of the earth, as immaculately dressed and gently looking ballerinas with tail-coats, superb starchery, carnations, and gleaming (if somewhat receding) hair, gently and delicately set out on long, long walking tours impeded by a lady of astonishing svelteness and grace who goes thus backward without tremor or hesitation (save when the steps demand them, of course). His tails, nearly touching the floor behind, dip like swallows at even; her skirts, a backward rushing wave of inexpensive tulle, permit us twinkling glances of her feet executing something called 'a syncopated chassis'. They smile, they murmur unheard words, under cover of the jolly fellow in the white d-j and his top-hole band. 'The lordly ones', we think; 'they laugh and are gay and are terrible', and win all the prizes from Stockholm to Stourbridge. Which amounts to saying that I found Television Dancing Club a joy and am still nursing

a sprain caused by my ineffectual participation in a rumba which looked carefree enough on the dance floor but had not been planned to fit in with the furniture in my room.

Earlier that Monday (now receding into comfortless memory) was a version of 'Vice Versa' in which George Benson was delightfully himself as the transmogrified parent: funny and silly and somehow seasonable and well produced by Joy Harington. But 'Once in a Lifetime', the other play of that weekend, was rather too ambitious a business, with about twenty-five characters. Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman had a winner there at the time it was written; and perhaps, with a good deal more working up, it could all be made to shine again. As it was, Harry Green was often very funny indeed once he got the bit between his teeth, and there was much conscientiously transatlantic small-part playing. But I doubt if this will be among the ten best television plays of the year which some scribes more industrious than myself are no doubt already voting and quoting in *fin de saison* encomia.

At the time of writing, advanced to meet the Christmas offensive, the Menotti Christmastide operetta 'Amahl' has not been seen yet. But I saw a film of the American version of it recently and can recommend it as 'superior'.

PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE

Sound Broadcasting

DRAMA

Many Voices

CECIL TROUNCE had one of the most immediately recognisable voices in broadcasting. It holds the imagination so firmly that we cannot believe it has fallen to silence. In future its tones in a recorded programme will stir memories of a wise and governing radio actor. Trouncer used what I called once the kind of Grinling Gibbons voice that chiselled the phrases, shaping them into carved leaf and flower. (That was as Sir William in 'The Judge's Story'.) He kept a natural dignity, and he had, too, a vigour of projection, as in his speaking of Kyd's Hieronimo, that thrust a performance forward, never allowing it to dip or slacken. He could present the majestic growl of a Dr. Johnson; but his inherent kindness did not help him with the merely misanthropic—say Apemantus.



Scene from 'Vice Versa' on December 14, with (left to right) George Benson as Paul Bultitude, Raymond Rollett as Dr. Grimstone, and Anthony Valentine as Dick Bultitude



Scene from 'Cinderella' on December 17, with (left to right) Arnold Matters as Alidoro, Gertrude Holt as Cinderella, Maureen Springer as Clorinda, and Josephine Veasey as Thisbe

Although his voice was so distinctive, chiselled so precisely, Trouncer could always separate his characters. They are not blurred together in memory: to every part he brought a fresh mind, and radio-drama will miss his creations and recreations and the special weight that Trouncer could lend to experienced age.

Curiously, Diana Wynyard's voice did not summon as I expected it to do in Ronald Jeans' 'Lean Harvest' (Home). She could cope easily enough with the character of the worldly wife; but this Celia seemed less compelling than we had remembered on the stage. The husband (who might say in effect, with the Edwardian adventuress in the melodrama, that 'L.s.d. is the only game worth winning') is the dominant figure, and, properly, Howard Marion-Crawford dominated. 'During my whole life I have never consciously let anything come between me and my business'. We were persuaded; and we believed, too, in the brother who wrote fiction about the Jacobites. If I remember rightly, a dream-scene was cut; the play, a firm study of an obsession, could do without it.

It was good to hear 'Lean Harvest' because it is one of the plays still talked about and now very seldom met. Such work as this (from more than twenty years ago) can revive a period surprisingly. 'Oblige me by referring to the Files', said Kipling; more actable material exists among half-forgotten play files than many people will credit. 'Lean Harvest' has wit; it is well-composed; and the performance was credible enough all round to keep us satisfied. (Geoffrey Sumner had his moment when in trouble with the plot of 'Lady Into Fox'). My only worry was the failure of Miss Wynyard's voice to stay in the mind.

Strindberg's 'To Damascus' (Third) is a play doomed as a rule to be locked in the text. Peter Watts, guide on one of its few airings, has just taken us through the second part. This sustained the relentless vigour and managed to keep us intent if not invariably impressed. The Unknown Man, on his wild pilgrimage, dabbles in alchemy; there is a frenzied scene when, entertained at a Topers' Club, he believes that the government is honouring his discovery of gold. 'Wandering without respite, tormented by conscience', the Stranger moves on his weird journey towards the third part. Mr. Watts, in a gallant adventure, has destroyed one donnish belief, that 'the play can only be satisfactorily read; it cannot be spoken'. It is being spoken; and Valentine Dyall, Catherine Salkeld, Howieson Culff, and the rest are speaking it: voices that do as much as any could to help us through the wild.

If you find yourself with conflicting appointments—one on the road to Damascus, the other with Bernard Braden in his Never-Never Land—well, 'What would you do, chums?', as Syd Walker used to say. In the event, I could get only a few minutes of 'Bedtime with Braden' (Home) and regretted the loss: I arrived, very late, somewhere in what seemed to be the most eccentric performance of a Greek tragedy on record; nobody (which was cheering) had a clue. There is a happy—if misleading—air of improvisation about the Braden programmes; certainly nothing begins or ends better. The latest spasm stopped when Ronald Fletcher read, with infinite gravity, what turned out to be a league table of Area Temperatures. And, guiltily, I switched back to Strindberg and the Topers' Banquet.

The matter-of-fact, soft-hairbrush voice of Braden is unmistakable. So, too, are the voices of 'Much-Binding' (Home), though I cannot say that the script of a recent instalment helped much. I recall a pun about a singer who was called Annie Seed (Annie Seed Bawl—get it?); and there was a wholly pleasant Brains Trust in which the question-master, faced with a

query that involved the words 'numismatics' and 'hexameters', passed it swiftly to Sam Costa. There's a voice for you. Any amateur Professor Higgins would leap to it with a glad cry of 'Hoxton!' Probably quite wrong.

J. C. TREWIN

THE SPOKEN WORD

Signs and Symbols

I REPORTED LAST WEEK that among much arduous listening there were refreshing interludes and I instanced in the former class the Reith Lecture, and in the latter Mary Hope Allen's 'Miscellany', but I didn't point out that the miscellany follows immediately on the lecture and so reveals a pretty piece of planning on the part of the Home Service. For Dr. Oppenheimer screws you up, demands of you the maximum of concentration, and just when you begin to feel that you are reaching your elastic limit Miss Allen screws you down, lowers your pitch, and drops you into a state of restful diffusion, accepting whatever she offers in pickings from all the ages and all quarters of the globe, whether from China (*via* Arthur Waley), from ancient Rome in a letter from Cicero to Atticus (*via* Samuel Parker and Rose Macaulay) or from our own literature. Dr. Oppenheimer fed me hard tack again last week, but this time I managed to break off and even digest a few crumbs.

Hard tack describes also a programme on the Third—'The Symbols at Your Door' written and produced by Terence Tiller—not because it was too hard but because it was too dry, so that while finding it extremely interesting I found it very heavy going. Its theme was 'Green Grow the Rushes', that strange old song whose verses count up to twelve and give for each number an extraordinary assortment of associations—'the nine bright shiners', 'the eight April Rainers', 'the two lily-white boys', the 'partridge in a pear-tree', and so on. The programme described the various versions and remote origins of the song, its mixture of pagan and Christian symbols, and the numerical correspondences between the various items. All this was fascinating but at the same time tantalising because of the manner of its presentation which was to give us such a plethora of information from the mouths of various speakers that memory grew surfeited and failed to function. I found, too, that the use of several speakers with voices of different pitch, volume, and pronunciation, so far from enlivening the broadcast and helping the listener, added to the difficulty of picking up and following the thread. How much clearer and pleasanter would have been a straight talk which gave less information and more interpretation, selecting a few verses of the song and dealing with them with greater particularity. In short, the fault lay in the cookery; the material was excellent and the programme must have involved much labour and thought.

I broke into a broadcast which preceded the fore-mentioned in time to hear a good half of it and to wish I had heard it all: it was 'No New Thing Under the Sun', in which Alec Robertson discussed 'some striking correspondences, in texture or emotional feeling, between the music of different times'. This is one of those programmes which, as between my musical colleague and myself, may be described as moot—a musical programme with verbal comments or a talk with musical illustrations: who is to say which? However, I will venture to record that Mr. Robertson, who is always well worth listening to, showed some surprising parallels between, for instance, passages in a Handel oratorio and a Beethoven piano concerto, a Monteverdi and a Britten opera, and another Monteverdi opera and Strauss' 'Salomé'. As

he pointed out, it is impossible to say whether the parallels were the result of conscious or unconscious influence or pure chance. The imperfectly musical are apt to find parallels and even plagiarisms where none exist, but those chosen by Mr. Robertson hit one, so to speak, in the ear and by their hints at a continuity in the development of music down the ages they threw reassuring and helpful lights on what for some listeners may seem to be the howling wilderness of contemporary music.

Why is it that stories on the B.B.C. have shrunk to a mere trickle? There must be, to put it mildly, a dozen good short-story writers among contemporary authors, but we hear next to nothing of them over the air. True, the very short 'Morning Story' has made a welcome return to the Light Programme, but on the Third the story is dazzlingly conspicuous by its absence. One very short one, called 'The Rainbow', by Ruskin Bond (read by Robert Rietty) popped up recently and I hope it is a promise of more and longer to come. It was a pleasantly written piece, simple and attractive, but was it a story? I believe a story should reveal one or more characters and/or a gradually evolving incident. I would call 'The Rainbow', with no derogatory implication, a sketch.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

BROADCAST MUSIC

Russian Fantasies

BESIDES ENLARGING THE scope of opera in the direction of historical epic and romantic tragedy, Russian composers have brightened it with their brilliant handling of fantastic fairy-tales. Unlike the Germans, who treat such things seriously with a tender sentimentality, the Russians' touch is light, humorous, and tinged with burlesque and satire. Rimsky-Korsakov is the chief exponent of the fairy-tale opera, and we had a sample of his work last week in a concert performance of excerpts from 'The Snow Maiden' given by the Birmingham University Musical Society under the direction of Professor Anthony Lewis. If it did not give those who do not know the opera an impression of a unified music-drama, at least it showed what delightful music the composer's fantastic imagination could produce. And, after all, a taut dramatic unity is not the first requisite for a successful fantasy.

If it were; Prokofiev's 'Love for Three Oranges' would dismal fail. For this proceeds beyond fantasy towards the realm of nonsense, where dwell the Jabberwock and the toeless Pobble. Yet it is not pure nonsense, since it has, like 'The Golden Cockerel', which is to be revived at Covent Garden in the new year, a satirical point. The meaning of the burlesque, which will probably have escaped most listeners, seemed, however, to matter little. It is the funniness and inconsequence of the opera that tells.

Prokofiev managed to write imaginatively picturesque and witty music which exactly matches the nonsensical action. It is when he is called upon to provide something a little more solid that he is found wanting. There is, I suppose, some point in the King's unrelieved dolefulness, but, like other bores depicted on the stage, he is in danger of becoming a real bore to the listener. Prokofiev was too often content with manifold repetitions of a brief phrase in order to work up a dramatic climax. When the magician Tchelie conjures up Farfarello, he does so by repeating his name no less than two dozen times, until we get tired of the sound of it. A composer more skilled in theatrical effect would have reduced the passage to a quarter of its length.

The presentation of this opera which, more than most, demands the visual scene for its pantomimic effect, was brilliantly managed by

Dennis Arundell. By skilful, but never obtrusive or irritating, additions to the text, he managed to keep us advised of what was happening. His translation, too, was skilful and generally seemed to come easily from the singers, though even Mr. Arundell has not been able to dispense with that libretto-translator's stand-by, the otiose syllable, e.g., 'Give me your hand now', where the last word has no meaning in the context and is put in to correspond with the feminine ending of a Russian word. The performance, under Nicolai Malko's direction, could hardly have been better.

It was pleasant to hear the Boyd Neel Orchestra again under the direction of its eponymous conductor and creator, who is on a visit from Canada, though he might have chosen a more interesting programme for his reappearance. Neither the early *Divertimento* by Mozart

nor the Forty-third Symphony of Haydn rose above the ordinary. Gordon Jacob's Bassoon Concerto, played by John Alexandra, was well worth reviving as an example of the composer's good craftsmanship and of his skill, so rare nowadays, in writing music which is light and attractive without ever being trivial. It is the modern equivalent of the *divertimento*.

Sir Thomas Beecham, conducting at the Royal Philharmonic Society's concert, devoted himself to Beethoven—the 'Coriolan' Overture, and the Sixth and Seventh Symphonies. Any two consecutive symphonies, beginning with an even-numbered one, will make a good programme. But Beecham's elegance and lithe handling of the phrasing suits the 'Pastoral' better than the Symphony in A major. The 'Scene by the brook' was given a particularly beautiful per-

formance, the conductor lavishing all his loving care upon the shaping of its woodland sounds and continuous bird-song. The first two movements of the later symphony went well enough, but the Scherzo and finale were surely too light in weight, and were taken too fast to be properly articulate.

Earlier the same evening I heard an interesting programme by the Goldsborough Orchestra conducted by Charles Mackerras, who included in it the revised version of Bartók's Second Suite, an attractive work with a beautiful slow movement for bass clarinet, and Dvořák's Romance for violin and orchestra, whose waltz-like lilt was charming and had an admirable exponent in Nona Liddell, a violinist with a steady tone and sensitiveness in phrasing.

DYNELEY HUSSEY

John Ireland and the Piano

By NORMAN SUCKLING

The first of four programmes of Ireland's piano music will be broadcast at 10.45 p.m. on Sunday, January 3 (Third)

WHEN one comes to think of it, John Ireland was the first English composer—hardly even challenged by Bax—to provide the pianist with a body of work fit for recital purposes by the same title as Chopin, Brahms, or the Russian lyrists. Elgar, Vaughan Williams, and Holst had triumphed in choral and orchestral writing; Frank Bridge, Bax, and McEwen had provided for chamber-music players; and a number of composers from Quilter upwards (including Ireland himself) had begun the foundations of a *corpus* of song-literature unrivalled since the lutenists; but the pianist could vary 'German classics' only with Chopin and the Russians unless he were enterprising enough to play French novelties such as Debussy, so difficult to acquire and so expensive to buy. This was the state of affairs at the time of the first world war; true, there was Cyril Scott—of considerably less account than the slight though refreshing Grieg—but otherwise, what English composer wrote for the pianoforte?

Even so, Ireland found himself comparatively late, and, like Debussy, latest of all in pianoforte music. The 'Decorations' date from 1912-13, whereas the D minor Violin Sonata is of 1909. How much early pianoforte work Ireland destroyed among his other youthful indiscretions I do not know; but at any rate, when he decided to publish these three highly evocative sketches as really worthy of him, they put him at once in the forefront of living writers for the instrument. 'Moon-glaide' indeed, that remarkable essay in superimposed sonorities, contains implications which even Ireland himself has not followed up very far; the composer to have done so is rather Bridge, in the works of his final experimental period.

The 'Decorations' were credited with a French allegiance when they came out, which is not very probable. What is important is that John Ireland, from this publication onwards, displayed virtues more or less forgotten by all who tried to write *Charakterstücke* after Schumann, intermezzini in the succession of Brahms, or lyrics of a Chopinesque order. As against this host of imitators, these latter-day romantics whose pieces appeared with a certain justifiable shamefacedness at the end of recitals of the day, Ireland's works were like the breath of a new wind. I still remember the shock of 'Chelsea Reach' as a sight-reading test, in a competition festival whose previous history had prepared us to expect nothing more disconcerting than Jensen or von Wilm. At last we could draw on our own countryman for 'nature-pieces' of

greater import than 'Rustle of Spring', an instrumental carol ('The Holy Boy') evoking a so much more honourable past than that of 'Good King Wenceslas', and a Rhapsody audacious enough to carry a rhythmic impetus throughout its length and spurn all temptations to pad out with rhetorical beatings of the void or 'introductions to introductions' of the Lisztian stamp.

Then came the Sonata, honoured with a first performance by a pianist of international repute (though I am not aware that he ever played it again). Some of the best of Ireland's chamber music had been written in the meantime, and the Sonata was no disappointment after this growth in stature. The Ireland that we now know so well, having already made himself known by the A minor Violin Sonata, was announced definitively by those harshly-savouried chords varying with schemes of interlocking perfect fourths; by the long quaver 'beams' as wide as the page, carrying either a 'dying fall' in the right hand or a mounting series in the left, of chords seeming to contain more notes than one could play; and by the diatonic nostalgia in flat keys, enhanced by the drop of a fifth or a sixth in the melody. This last feature may suggest Elgar; but Ireland is uncommon in his ability to use these descending intervals and still convey an individuality of his own over against Elgar—and, for that matter, to base his music on scales involving a sharp fourth or a flat seventh without resembling 'neo-modality', well though that cardinal virtue of so much modern music must have contributed to the liberation of his talent.

When he did write along lines more closely related to other models of his time the result was not so good; the short melodic phrases pivoting on a single note, of the type of the carnival-motive in *Petrushka*, tend to give an effect of marking time on the spot, as in the finale of his Concerto. But it is the more complex forces rather than the extended structures which are perhaps a source of weakness in John Ireland. The Concerto, with some lovely moments, is uncertain in its scope, and his attempt at choral-and-orchestral writing ('These things shall be') is as complete a failure as a hollow and pretentious text could make it. But his chamber works for and with the pianoforte (not forgetting also the exquisite 'Concertino pastorale') are as irreplaceable as the lyric pieces. For Ireland remained for many years almost the only British composer who could give of his full worth in pianoforte lyrics.

A number of these followed in the nineteen-

twenties, reaching the greatest height perhaps in the intensity of 'For Remembrance'—and then a period of three years which seems to have produced nothing. What had happened? Do the works of the later 'twenties give any clue to it? Is there, for example, any guide to a private meaning in the black despair of 'We'll to the woods no more'? One would not wish to surprise these privacies unduly, but Dr. Ireland has himself given us a half-invitation to do so by such comments as the retrospective date on 'Spring will not wait' (or is it on the who'e cycle?), and by his curious habit of self-quotation—a habit appearing sometimes even in works written within a very short time of each other. It was noticeable as early as the (presumably) conscious parody of 'Chelsea Reach' in 'Ragamuffin' and the exact repetition of the concluding bars of his song 'I have twelve oxen' in the first movement of the Sonata; but from 1927 onwards it becomes a phenomenon. A phrase from 'We'll to the woods no more' reappears in the Sonatina, and one from the Ballade in the Concerto; while a typical melodic figure, leading to a pause preparing a thematic entry (in the Ballade), can be traced in one form or another in almost everything Ireland wrote after the silence. And when 'Sarnia' appeared as a kind of retrospective summing-up of his pianoforte work—even reverting to the Channel-Island inspiration of 'The Island Spell'—its second number turned out to contain undoubtedly deliberate reminiscences of the Sonata (second movement), of 'Spring will not wait', and of 'April'.

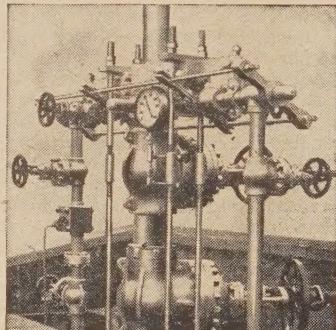
But of course 'Sarnia' is the epilogue to a long achievement by the same tokens as the 'Concertino pastorale'. In both, Ireland has given us yet another of those nostalgic middle movements, cast in a mould of which 'The Undertone' was the first exemplar and 'For Remembrance' one of the finest. He had always, as it were, reserved the right, even in his most astringent writing, to renew the melting mood of the 'Soliloquy' or 'The Darkened Valley' and to introduce statements of a heart-easing sensuousness, coming to rest on a minor seventh or one of its inversions; there is one in the Sonatina (first movement, just before the return of the first subject), rightly though that work was compared to Bartók on its appearance. And it is perhaps artistically fitting—whatever it may imply in the matter of a less than half-revealed personal programme—that John Ireland should thus have crowned a survey of thirty years of creative activity by so cyclic a completion of it.



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by Dr. W. L. Hildburgh, F.S.A.

The Sunday Evening Concerts will
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